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Summer chic and shine

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'Passion' moves Cutud village

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Danding sons, favorite nephew endorse GMA

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Ano ang pinakamabigat na pasanin ng Pinoy?
NGAYONG ALAS-10 NG GABI SA ABC

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

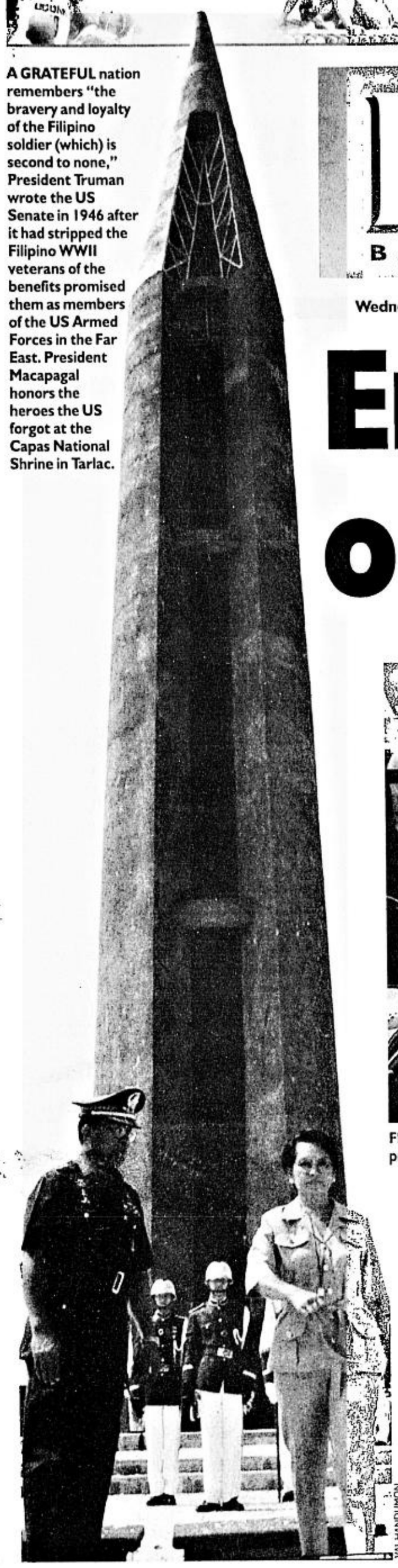
Wednesday, April 7, 2004 ★★ 42 pages / 4 sections / vol. 19 / no. 121 P18 website: www.inq7.net

US wants Abu suspect extradited for kidnap-slay

By Leila B. Salaverria, Christian V. Esguerra and Philip C. Tubeza

THE US GOVERNMENT has asked the National Bureau of Investigation to start extradition proceedings against one of six suspected Abu Sayyaf members arrested last month for allegedly planning to bomb establishments in

US WANTS/ A8



A GRATEFUL nation remembers "the bravery and loyalty of the Filipino soldier (which) is second to none," President Truman wrote the US Senate in 1946 after it had stripped the Filipino WWII veterans of the benefits promised them as members of the US Armed Forces in the Far East. President Macapagal honors the heroes the US forgot at the Capas National Shrine in Tarlac.

VAL HANDUMON

Embassies, malls on Abu target list

ROMEO GACAD/AFP

FIGHTING to the end of his days at the Veterans Memorial Medical Center, Bartolome Gacad carried on to protest the injustice of over 60 years committed against him and fellow veterans. Gacad, 89, died March 5.

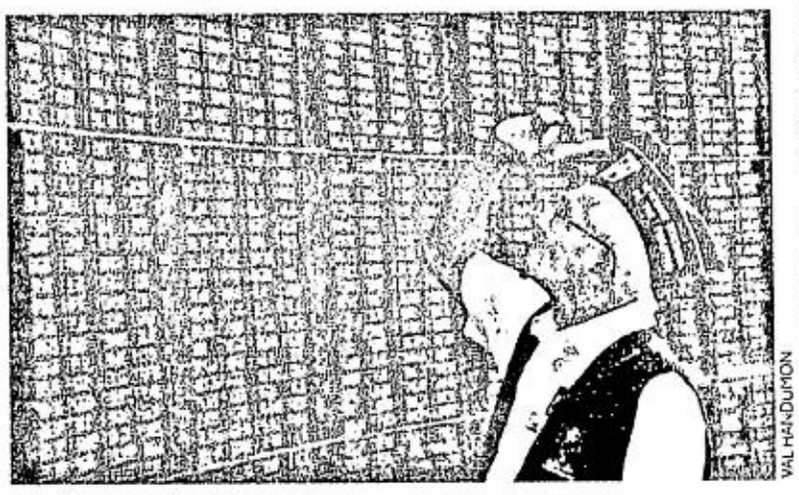
Fading RP vets fight longest war

ON HIS deathbed last month, retired Col. Bartolome Gacad wore a T-shirt that read: "Justice for the Filipino WWII veterans." It was a powerful reminder of a controversy that has resonated for six decades, after what military historians have described as one of the worst atrocities of WWII.

With each passing year, the veterans' lines are getting thinner. But their search for justice endures.

Yesterday, veterans of the Bataan campaign gathered at the Capas National Shrine in Tarlac and joined officials led by President Macapagal-Arroyo in re-

FADING/ A8



VAL HANDUMON

WALL OF HEROES bears the names of those who endured the three-day 100-km Death March. Crisanto Lapas checks out his comrades' names.

Terror cell busted, says PNP intel chief

By Christian V. Esguerra

STRATEGIC targets including embassies, public utilities, hotels, shopping malls, train stations and other densely populated areas were on the bombing list of the Abu Sayyaf cell that the Philippine National Police has neutralized, a top PNP official said yesterday.

The cell led by Alhamser Manatad Limbong, alias Kosovo, had planned to set off explosives in at least 36 targets, according to Director Robert Delfin, chief of PNP intelligence. The targets were supposedly listed on a piece of paper found in Kosovo's wallet when he was arrested late last month.

Delfin said the Abu Sayyaf had also planned to kidnap the scion of a prominent businessman whom he did not name.

He said the list found in Kosovo's wallet identified these targets in no specific order: the US and Israeli embassies, the Senate and House of Representatives, the Philippine Stock Exchange, Manila Electric Co. facilities the Sual power plant in Pangasinan, the oil depot in Pandacan, telecommunications facilities, and gas stations.

Also listed, according to Delfin, were Eastwood City in Libis, SM, Rustan's, Gotesco and Robinson's shopping malls, Glorietta, Makati Cinema Square, Harrison Plaza, The Landmark, Star Mall and Star Mart, Araneta Coliseum, Philsports Arena, Cuneta Astrodome, casinos and bars in the Mabini area in Manila.

He said there was also a plan to blow up the Philippine International Convention Center, the Cultural Center of the Philippines, the World Trade Center, churches, hotels and broadcast networks, on top of the MRT and LRT stations,

EMBASSIES/ A8

Makati's soul can be found in this barangay

By Margaux Ortiz

THE RESIDENTS of Makati's oldest barangay like to say that they help the country's most modern borough and premier financial and business district regain its soul during the Lenten season.

The week immediately before and during Holy Week, the busy streets of Barangay Poblacion, Makati's original town proper, are closed as residents go about constructing the *kalbaryo*, the temporary altars or houses built on the streets where the devout chant and read the narrative of the passion and death of Jesus Christ, called the *pabasa*.

Emmy Tagunicar, the *hermano mayor* (major sponsor) of this year's pabasa in Poblacion, said local parishioners began constructing "kalbaryos" in the early 1900s as a venue for the community chanting and reading.

Groups of old women and a scattering of men and younger people gather inside the *kalbaryo* and participate in the melodic vernacular chanting, using for their text the book detailing the story of Christ's passion and death, called the *pasyon*.

MAKATI'S/ A4

POWER CRISIS OR NO POWER CRISIS

Gov't, private sector agree to work together

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Abigail L. Ho

WITH OR without a power crisis, the government and the private sector have agreed to work together to promote a healthy competitive environment for electricity providers and distributors while protecting the interests of consumers.

The agreement was reached during a meeting Monday between Energy Secretary Vince Perez and First Generation Holdings Corp. president Federico Lopez at the Department of Energy head office in Quezon City to thresh out their conflicting projections on the country's power supply situation.

"We have decided that the sooner we all work together, the more options we will have to address our power requirements in the coming years. We are confident that we will overcome the challenges in the power sector," Perez said.

Lopez earlier told businessmen during a briefing that the country faced a serious power crisis as early as 2007 unless new power plants were built now. But this was dismissed by Perez who branded Lopez's warning of an impending power crisis as "imaginary."

The energy chief said the government and the power industry

GOV'T/ A9

FULL moon and folded arms in prayer as thousands of Muslims led by actor Robin Padilla start their vigil for peace at the Quezon City Memorial Circle from midnight Monday until Tuesday morning. *(Related story on Page A6.)*

Erap's bid for villa retreat approved

By Armand N. Nocum

THE SANDIGANBAYAN antigraft court has granted jailed ex-President Joseph Estrada's petition to be let out of his military jail to spend Holy Week reflecting on Christ's Passion in the comfort of his newly refurbished vacation estate in Tanay, Rizal.

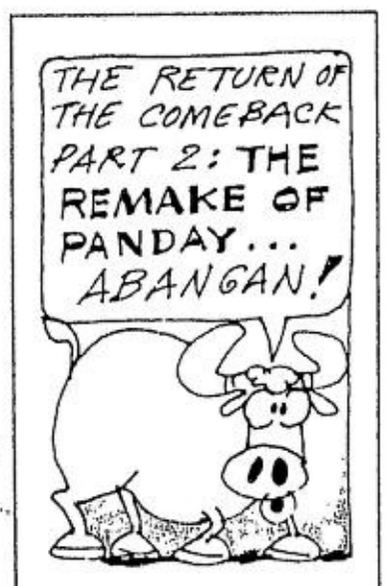
In a resolution released yesterday, the Sandiganbayan said it was allowing Estrada to undertake a three-day "spiritual retreat" at his lavish vacation estate, from 8 a.m. on April 8 to 5 p.m. on April 10, in deference to Filipino Christian faith and tradition.

Also in the spirit of the season, the prosecution is not vigorously opposing the idea.

"Let's give him [Estrada] what he wants so he can overcome the bitterness in his heart," said Chief Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio.

Estrada, who is detained on plunder charges at the Camp Capinpin military camp right across from his private resort, has been heard to rant and swear angrily against Villa-Ignacio, who has thwarted Estrada's every at-

ERAP'S/ A4



Repackaged FPJ to come out of Lent

By Carlito Pablo

A NEW and improved Fernando Poe Jr.—more articulate, media-friendly and looking every inch a winner—is expected after the opposition standard-bearer emerges from a Lenten retreat and a workshop with his key advisers.

While the national slate of Poe's Koalisyon ng Nag-

REPACKAGED/ A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7, 2004

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern and Eastern Luzon including Bicol Region will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers or thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/04/07/04

GMA aides sure of Danding support

By Juliet Labog-Javellana, Cynthia D. Balana and TJ Burgonmio

FOR PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo's top aides, hope springs eternal. After two sons of businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco and yesterday, his favorite nephew, endorsed her candidacy, the President's aides are now confident of getting the support of "The Boss"

Tarlac Rep. Gilbert Teodoro, a bar topnotcher and said to be Cojuangco's personal favorite, yesterday expressed full support for the President's candidacy after hosting a luncheon for her in Tarlac City.

During lunch, he expressed full and unconditional support for Ms Macapagal as the "only leader who can unite us," manage the affairs of the state. "We will do everything to make sure you prevail," he said.

Earlier, Pangasinan Rep. Mark Cojuangco and Negros Occidental Rep. Carlos Cojuangco publicly endorsed the President.

Teodoro, a member of the executive committee of Cojuangco's Nationalist People's Coalition, said the NPC in Tarlac was giving its solid support to Ms Macapagal.

He said he was for the President because she had an advantage "experience-wise" over her rivals.

Charter change

"She has experience, has a good program of government including one issue that is very close to my heart—Charter change," Teodoro said.

Teodoro said 70 percent of the NPC, which has many members in the local level, were supporting the President. But other NPC members were supporting opposition candidate Fernando Poe Jr.

But he clarified that his uncle, the influential chair and CEO of San Miguel Corp., was not going to endorse any presidential candidate.

"He is non-political. He will not support any candidate. The (SMC) investors are against him making any endorsement, especially in the form of funds," he said.

Teodoro brought along a number of Tarlac mayors to the luncheon for Ms Macapagal, who spoke in commencement exercises in Concepcion and Camiling.

Also present were Tarlac Rep. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, son of former President Corazon Aquino and the late Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr., Tarlac Gov. Jose Yap and other local officials.

While Teodoro claimed that majority of NPC members were supporting Ms Macapagal, her own Lakas partymates at the local level are junking the President in favor of opposition presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr.

Negros Occidental Rep. Apolinario Lozada, a former Lakas leader who defected to Poe's camp, said some Lakas candidates had secretly prepared sample ballots carrying the name of Poe or Sen. Panfilo Lacson, another opposition presidential candidate.

He said the sample ballots will be disseminated on or before the May 10 national elections.

'Bulong brigades'

"But for now, these local bets are mobilizing their 'bulong brigades' to endorse their preferred presidential candidate," said Lozada.

Lozada even quoted an administration congressman as saying that Lakas local candidates were resigned to the fact that most of their constituents would vote for Poe.

He did not identify the congressman.

But Lozada said the President was not the only one being junked. He said some senatorial candidates of the administration coalition K-4 were also being junked in favor of opposition candidates.

This, he stressed, was nothing new in politics as this has been a practice during election campaigns.

He said that candidates from the NPC, a political ally of the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats, were also facing the same dilemma in their respective districts.

Hard-sell

"GMA is hard to sell at the grassroots level because majority of the people have already committed their votes to their idol FPJ," he said.

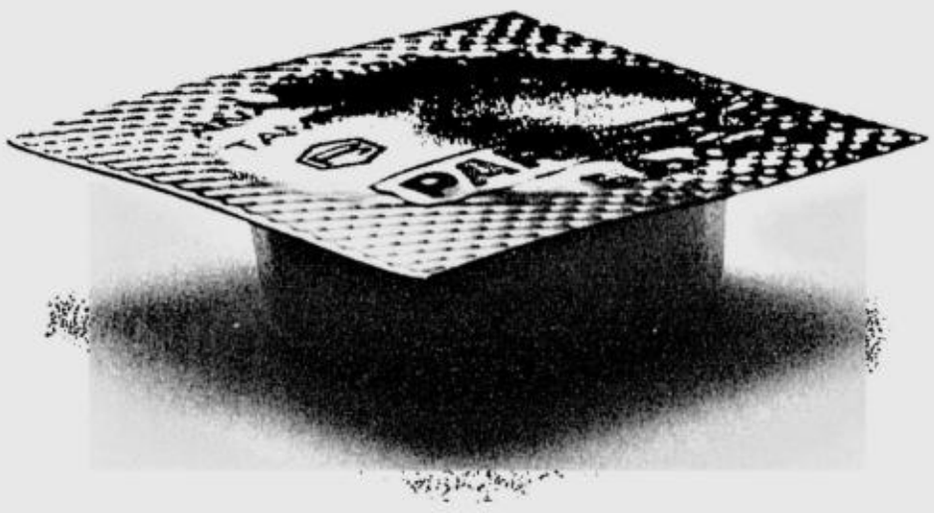
Lozada said many Lakas candidates would be joining the opposition 15 days before the elections.

"Supporting FPJ will be the most practical thing to do or they will lose the election," he added.

The defections are, however, not only limited to Lakas but also to presidential candidate Raul Roco, whose major supporters have begun deserting him.

Former Rep. Gualberto Lumauig, who led the defectors, yesterday blamed Roco's consistent poor showing in the poll surveys for the defections.

Tapos na ang sakit ng ulo.



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Palace gives Poe 3 days to change mind on debate

By Blanche S. Rivera

A CHANGE of heart and a text message saying it's a go.

That's all it would take for a presidential debate sponsored by the Commission on Elections and the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting featuring all five presidential candidates to take place on April 14.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye gave opposition candidate Fernando Poe Jr. three days to change his mind. He said that if the actor had a change of heart over the Holy Week, the President would have 72 hours to adjust her schedule, meaning that Poe should reconsider his position by Saturday.

Yesterday, Rod Reyes, Poe's media bureau chief, announced during the last organizational meeting of the PPCRV, the Comelec and the political parties that Poe's decision to shun the debate was "final."

President Macapagal-Arroyo also formally begged off yesterday from joining, citing the refusal of Poe, her strongest rival, to participate in the televised debate.

"A debate without him is meaningless," said Bunye in a letter to PPCRV founding chair Henrietta de Villa. He said the President would just present her agenda of change directly to the people.

"All it would take is a text message from Mr. Reyes," Bunye said during a meeting held at the Comelec yesterday.

If that text message does not come, the debate dubbed "Debateng Pampanguluhan 2004" to be aired over ABC 5 would be down to Alyansa ng Pag-Asa candidate Raul Roco and evangelist Bro. Eddie Villanueva of the Bangon Pilipinas party.

The two were also the only ones who showed up at the first debate sponsored by the ANC, Pulse Asia and the Philippine Legislators Committee on Population and Development.

"We have one week to go and, who knows, we can move mountains," said PPCRV founding chair and former ambassador to the Vatican Henrietta de Villa. She added that she would spend the Holy Week praying for a change of heart by the candidates.

"If we could just get the President, it would be worth it because then we would have two more debaters, including Sen. Panfilo Lacson," De Villa said. *With Juliet L. Javellana*

Bro. Mike won't pray for Bro. Eddie

THIS BROTHER is certainly not praying for the other.

Bro. Mike Velarde, leader of the Catholic charismatic group El Shaddai, yesterday vehemently denied his group had invited Bro. Eddie Villanueva, presidential candidate of the Bangon Pilipinas party, to be its special guest during Sunday's Easter Mass.

The denial came in the wake of a circulating text message that said Velarde had invited Villanueva, his rival, in order to pray over the latter.

Velarde's spokesperson Mel Robles said it was "very unlikely" that Velarde would invite Villanueva, founder of the five-million strong Jesus Is Lord Church Worldwide, to a Catholic Mass.

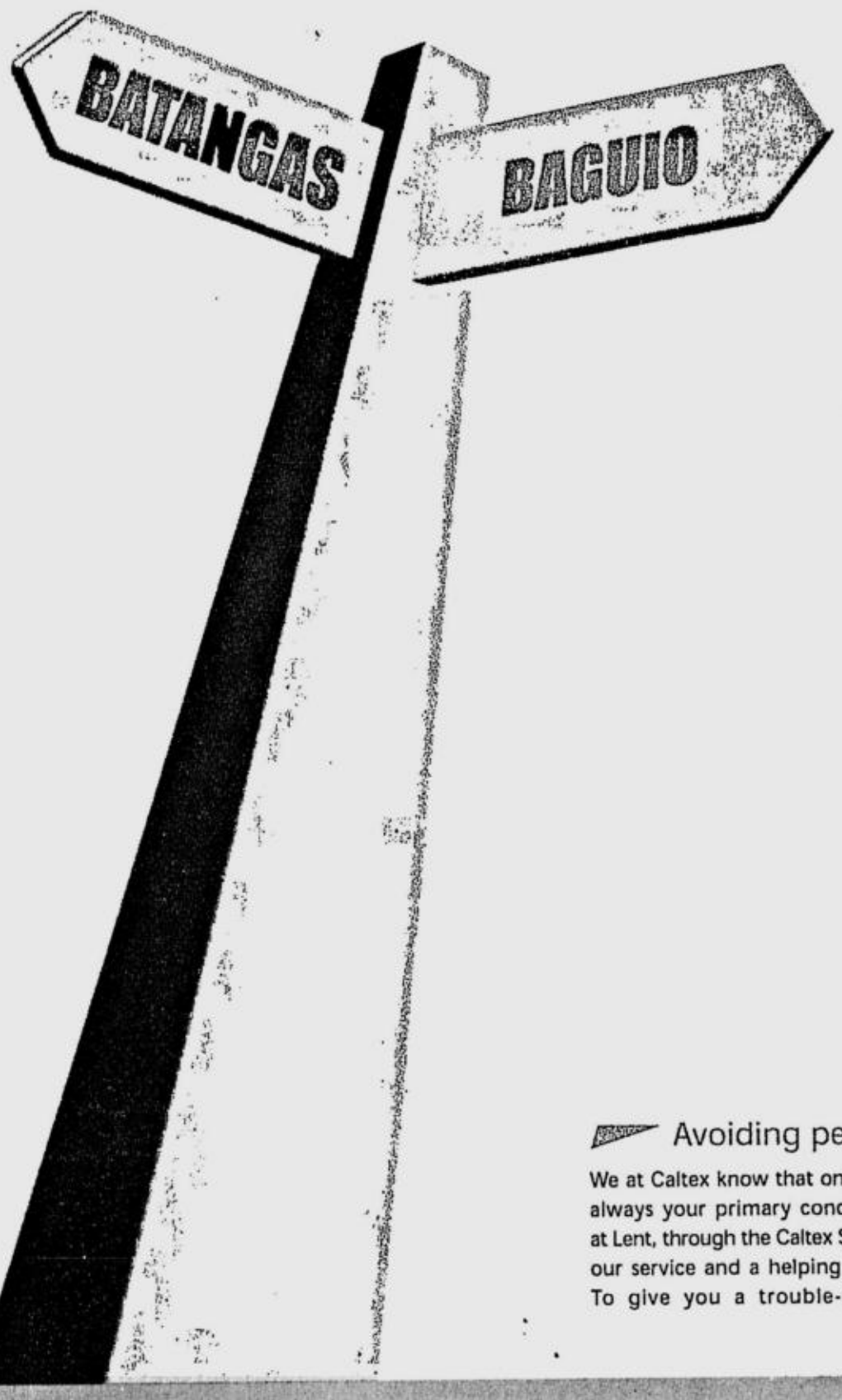
"No, it is not true, unless he is attending a Catholic Mass. Easter is the highest point for Catholics. No, you have it straight from the horse's mouth. That is very unlikely," Robles told the INQUIRERin a phone interview yesterday.

The text message went: 'BroEddie hs been invited by bro MikeVelarde 2 b 'prayed over' in d El Shaddai Easter Sunday overnite service. Praise God! Pls pas.' It was circulated among Bangon Pilipinas supporters Monday night.

Velarde and Villanueva had clashed over the rights to television Channel 11, which was granted to Villanueva by former President Corazon Aquino after Edsa I. The channel is now Zoe TV. Velarde, meanwhile, is now said to be eyeing a buy-out of sequestered International Broadcasting Corp. or Channel 13.

Blanche S. Rivera

What Drives You



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Makati's soul can be found in this barangay

From page A1

The kalbaryo, which can be a makeshift or elaborate affair, is a product of folk ingenuity and community spirit. Some are grand enough to occupy an entire street's width and house life-size papier mache Christ figures.

Tagunicar said the kalbaryos these days are a far cry from the simple structures erected by the faithful in other parts of the country.

'Little Intramuros'

He said that during Holy Week the kalbaryos transform Poblacion into a festive and touristy "little Intramuros," with people walking the streets from one kalbaryo to another in the same way that they now crowd the restored old Spanish Walled City.

"Many flock to the streets of Poblacion to see the kalbaryos. It has been the tradition in Makati for over a century now," he said.

Tagunicar believes the term kalbaryo may have been coined by the townsfolk who had to walk from one street to another for the pabasa and likened their experience to Christ's "journey to Calvary."

As the town's population grew, more and more kalbaryos were constructed every year. Neighborhoods, calling themselves *kalbaristas*, formed associations identified with a particular kalbaryo.

The number of kalbaryos in Poblacion has increased from seven before the war to the present 37, said Tagunicar.

Preparations, designs

Preparations for the construction of the kalbaryo begin at least a month before Holy Week, which generally falls on the second week of April.

"The kalbaristas, many of whom have a *panata* or vow of devotion to Jesus, solicit money to start making the structures in time for Holy Wednesday when the pabasa is scheduled to begin," Tagunicar said.

He said the design of the kalbaryos, which are constructed out of papier mache, depict themes from Christ's passion and death.

The kalbaristas spend as much as P60,000 on each kalbaryo.

John Ed de Vera, a Poblacion resident, said some of the more inventive kalbaristas incorporate artificial fountains and gardens into their designs.

Final touch

Some fashion fountains out of cement in the middle of the road while others use video walls to depict a make-believe sky, he said.

The final touch is the placing of life-size images of the suffering Christ inside the structure on Holy Wednesday, after which the "journey to Calvary" begins for parishioners and visitors alike.

Tagunicar said that after a parade of crosses, which include the parish's 6-ft. tall Bara Alta, or Sacred Cross, and a number of other smaller crosses from the different kalbaryos, the pabasa starts on the night of Holy Wednesday.

The Bara Alta, which is a reminder of Christ's presence during the pabasa, is then brought to each of the 37 kalbaryos, staying in one place for an hour and a half while the kalbaristas chant the pasyon.

Procession

Tagunicar said the life-size images are brought out of the kalbaryos on the night of Good Friday for the Easter Vigil procession.

The procession, which portrays the events leading to the Crucifixion, lasts for three hours, after which the images are returned to their kalbaryos.

After all the effort devoted to the making of the structures, the parishioners make sure that the kalbaryos "disappear" from the streets on Easter Sunday, said De Vera.

"Then the following year, everyone starts from scratch again," he said.

Strong bonds

De Vera said the act of constructing a beautiful kalbaryo that binds all the kalbaristas together.

He said the bond among the members of the associations is so strong that Poblacion natives residing abroad come home during Holy Week just to participate in the construction of the kalbaryos.

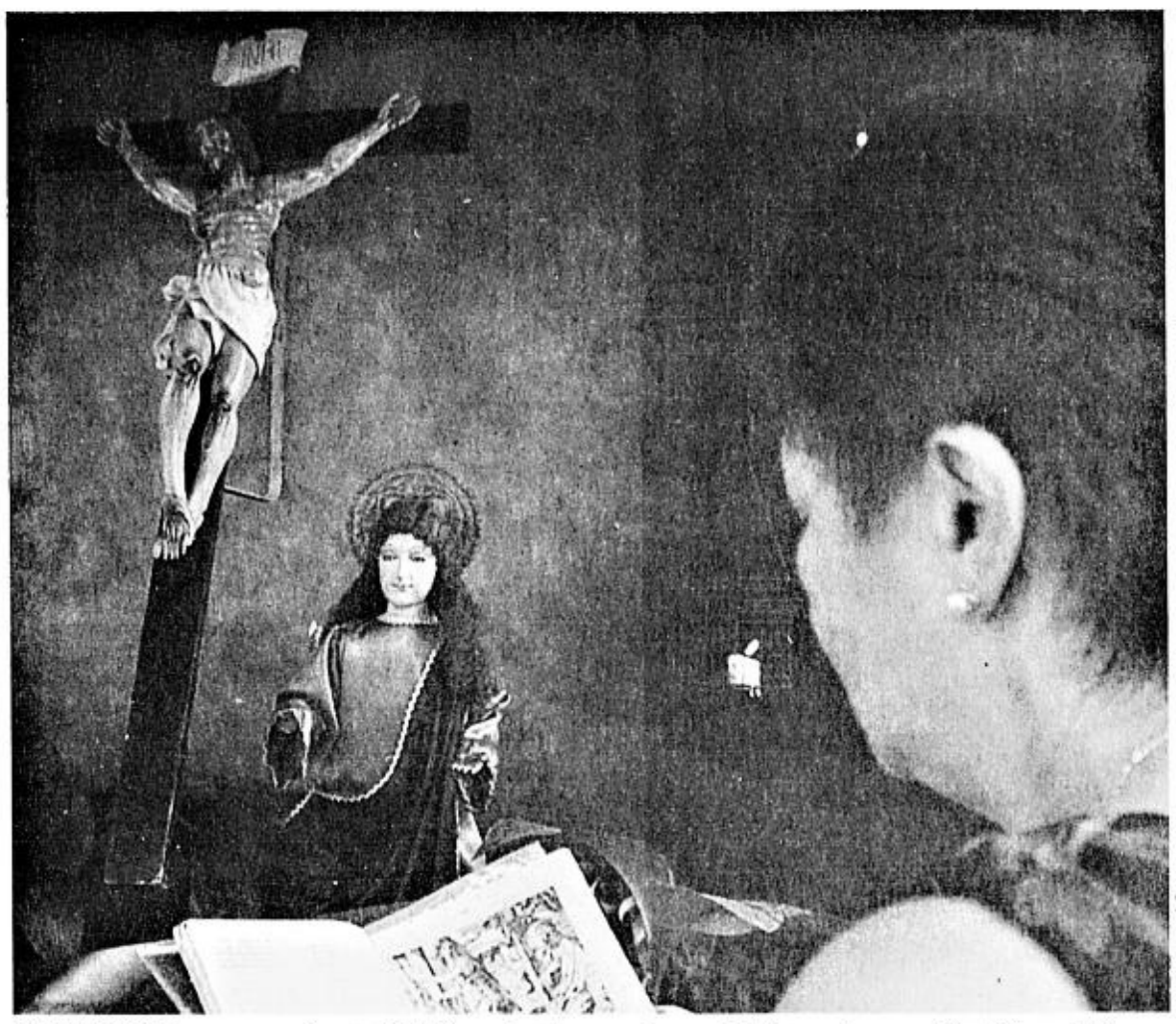
"We barely get sleep during the Lenten season because of our involvement in the meticulous making of kalbaryos. But we are happy and proud because we have a beautiful tradition to call our own," he said.

Tagunicar believes that Poblacion, which sits by the Pasig River near the Makati-Mandaluyong bridge, could very well compare as a Lenten tourist draw to the Moriones festival of Marinduque and the live Crucifixion reenactments of Pampanga.

Unique

"Makati may be seen as a bustling financial district during the other months of the year. But during Holy Week, its soul can be found in Poblacion," he said.

"You cannot be called a child or native of Makati if you do not know about our barangay's unique Lenten tradition," he proudly declares.



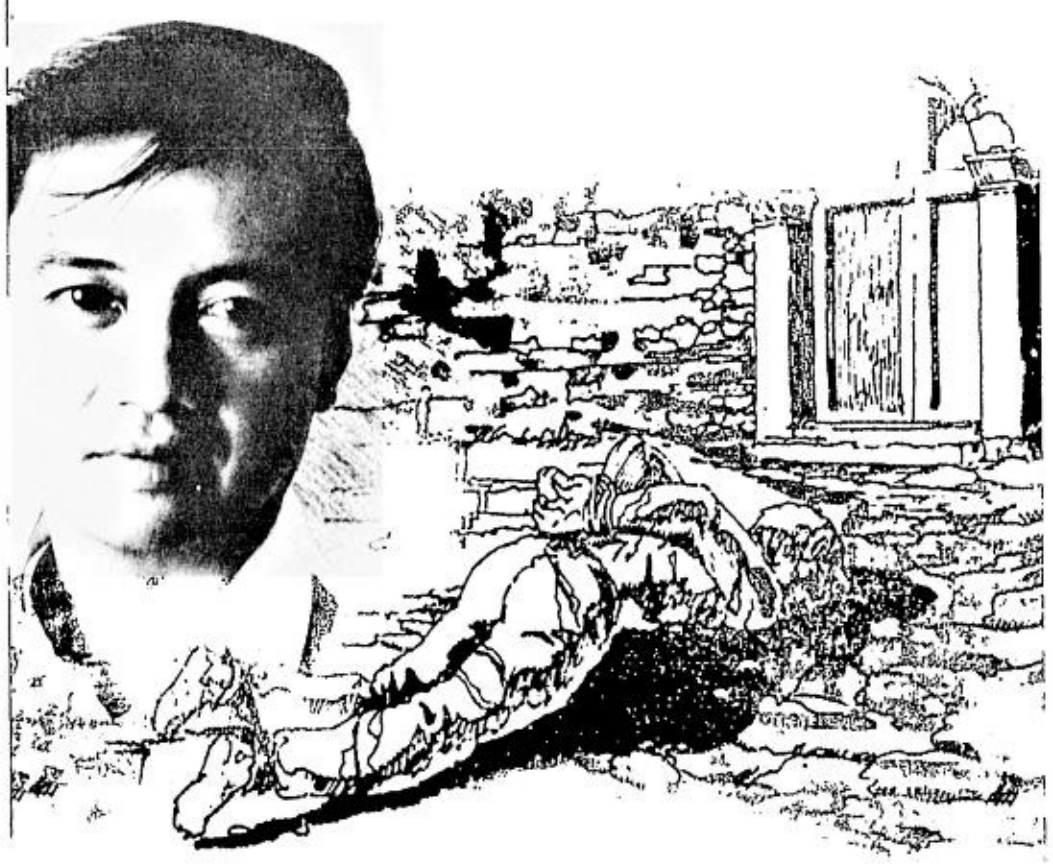
JOAN BONDOC

THE PASSION, not according to Mel Gibson but in accordance with the customs and traditions of the folks in Makati's oldest barangay who chant the passion of Jesus during the entire Holy Week. JESS YUSON

JESS YUSON

PAPIER maché figure of the suffering Christ is one of 37 "kalbaryos," temporary altars built right in the streets of Barangay Poblacion in Makati City, which has been the practice for over a century now.

ALVAREZ
KAKAMPI NG MGA API



Noong 1974, ang luray-luray na katawan ni Marsman Alvarez, kapatid ni Heherson, ay itinapon sa harap ng isang simbahan sa Isabela. Inukit ang kanyang mga mata. Dinurog ang kanyang bungo at panga. Binunot ang dila, ngipin at kuko. Sa libing ni Marsman, inatake sa puso at namatay din ang ama ni Alvarez. Ang kanyang ina at isa pang kapatid ay halos nasiraan ng bait. Ang walang awang pagpaslang ay kabayaran ng walang takot na paglaban ni Heherson Alvarez sa diktadurya at mga TRAPO na kasabwat sa paggahasa ng bayan.

33 TAON NG PANININDIGAN SA PRINSIPYO.

KAKAMPI NG KALAYAAN

- Isa sa 10 Outstanding Con-Con Delegates, 1971; Isa sa hindi pumirma sa Marcos constitution.
- Kontra Marcos: Namuno ng Ninoy Aquino Movement na nagbunyag ng nakaw na yaman at walang tigil na tumutol sa US aid sa diktadurya.
- Pinarangalan ng United Nations Day Human Rights Award ng Fund for Free Expression, New York.

MAKATAONG MAMBABATAS

Bilang Senador ng 12 taon:

- Ama ng Comprehensive Agrarian Reform at Cooperative Development Authority (CDA)
- Panday ng Nursing Act, National Commission on Culture and the Arts at Department of Energy, at ang Eid'l Fitri para sa mga kapatid na muslim.
- Utak ng Clean Air Act, Integrated Protected Areas System at Solid Waste Management.
- Sponsor ng ratification ng ILO convention Rights of Migrant Workers at Indigenous Peoples.

Bilang Kongresista:

- Isinulong ang IMPEACHMENT laban kay ERAP.
- Sponsor ng mga batas para sa kababaihan, kabataan at may kapansanan.

KAKAMPI NG KALIKASAN

Bilang DENR Secretary:

- Tagapagtanggol ng maliliit na mga minero ng Mt. Diwalwal, mangingisda sa ilalim ng DAO17 at mga Bilaan ng Maguindanao upang isauli ang lupa ng kanilang ninuno.
- Inusig ang mga illegal loggers at mga makapangyarihang partido sa kontrobersyal na importasyon ng ozone depleting substance at hazardous waste.
- Nagpatupad ng programa para sa malinis na tubig at malawak na reforestation tugon sa panganib ng climate change.

ALVAREZ, KONTRA TRAPO! KAKAMPI NG TAO! DAPAT SA SENADO!

Political Ad paid by Advocates of Alvarez Independent Senatorial Campaign

Erap's bid for villa retreat approved

From page A1

tempt either to get special treatment from the court, delay the resolution of the plunder case, or put forward various appeals that sometimes border on the ridiculous.

2 motions

The court said it decided to grant Estrada's plea "considering the pervading spirit among Catholics and the entire Christendom during the Lenten season since the final march to Calvary had begun, as well as the culture, tradition and practice among Filipino people."

The resolution was signed by Justice Edilberto Sandoval, the acting chair of the special division handling the corruption and plunder cases against Estrada.

Sandoval presided over yesterday's proceedings in the absence of Sandiganbayan Presiding Justice Minita-Chico Nazario. Associate Justices Teresita de Castro and Cristina Estrada also signed the resolution.

The court was ruling on two motions filed by Estrada's court-appointed lawyers. One asked that he be allowed to stay at his rest house until the water supply was restored to his Camp Capinpin detention quarters. The other asked that he be granted a six-day spiritual retreat at his estate.

Having granted Estrada's request to go on retreat, the court said his request for a three-hour-a-day stay at his private estate had been rendered "moot and academic" as water may have been fully restored by the time the hearings were finished.

The court also ordered Philippine National Police chief Hermogenes Ebdane or his representatives to escort Estrada to his rest house at the designated time and implement "all the usual security measures throughout the stay of the accused in his Tanay property."

No further expense

In granting Estrada's wish, the court also cited the fact that the matter would "not entail any further expense on the part of the government" and that the special prosecution panel did not really have any objection to his going on spiritual retreat.

Although they opposed Estrada's temporary transfer to his rest house across from the Camp Capinpin complex, prosecutors led by Villa-Ignacio said they welcomed Estrada's decision to undergo spiritual renewal so that he could reflect on his "blessings and misfortunes."

But in their consolidated comment and opposition to the defense motion, the special prosecutors said "it would be more attuned to the sanctity and spirit of the Lenten season if accused Estrada [would], for once, forgo his earthly comforts and convenience and instead make little sacrifices as his offerings to the Lord."

Good for soul

Commenting on the court's decision, Villa-Ignacio said the prosecution was letting the issue be in the hope that Estrada would spend Holy Week in the "spiritual sense" because a retreat was "good for the soul."

"I hope he will be touched spiritually. It is an opportunity to communicate with the Lord. I wish that it will be a meaningful experience for him," he said.

Estrada has reportedly taken to attending Sunday mass in the private chapel at his vacation estate, reading the Bible, and following a regimen of daily prayers each morning since his incarceration.

Asked if he himself would go on retreat, Estrada's nemesis said he would be working throughout the Holy Week.

With the many motions and appeals filed by Estrada's lawyers, ranging from holiday furloughs to offering his 15-hectare vacation estate for rent to the government at P1 a year, regular working days were just not enough to complete the task of replying to the motions, said Villa-Ignacio.

Repackaged FPJ to come out of Lent

From page A1

kakaisang Pilipino (KNP) hits the road to campaign in Baguio City from Tuesday to Wednesday, the popular actor will be spending time at his Greenhills, San Juan residence, and then will be cloistered at his rest house in Antipolo the rest of the week.

Poe has taken a break from the campaign trail for what his spokesperson Rep. Francis Escudero (NPC, Sorsogon) described as his "traditional Lenten retreat."

Workshop

Opposition insiders said Poe's stay in Antipolo would also be a chance to hold a workshop with his top advisers. "It's a long-delayed discussion, mostly with members of the economic team, to discuss issues of governance relevant to the campaign," a source said, without naming names.

The workshop is expected to provide Poe with greater confidence in fielding questions from the media, particularly on how he intends to address specific national concerns should he win the May 10 presidential elections.

A high school dropout, Poe has been known to give clipped answers to media on such matters as economic issues. Unlike his rivals, the popular actor has also shunned formal press conferences and debates organized for presidential contenders.

Escudero, however, only went as far as acknowledging that there will be "some changes" in how Poe conducts his campaign.

Poe will also be meeting members of his national slate to discuss ways to improve the campaign, with just five weeks to go before polling day.

Escudero was quick to parry expected criticism that Poe had abandoned the KNP national slate in its Baguio sortie, saying there was an agreement that the actor would not join other candidates in the city.

Poe's spouse, actress Susan Roces, will join him during his Holy Week retreat. Sen. Vicente "Tito" Sotto III, his campaign spokesperson, earlier left for the United States for a short vacation with his wife, Helen Gamboa.

Party-list groups tagged Red fronts set raps vs Gonzales

SIX party-list groups outraged by allegations that they were communist fronts are readying a string of lawsuits against their accuser, National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales who had said he had the evidence to prove his case.

Charges of libel, violation of election laws and graft will be filed against Gonzales, said David Erro, lawyer of Anakpawis, one of the six party-list groups alluded to, adding that the five other groups—Bayan Muna, Gabriela, Anak ng Bayan, Migrante and Suara Bangsa Moro—would be joining as complainants.

"Gonzales abused his authority and committed grave and serious offenses against legitimate party-list groups and associations," said Erro." His malicious statements and first-rate political harassment exposed legal democratic organizations like Bayan Muna and Anakpawis to national persecution and state terror of the military and police establishments."

At a Malacañang press briefing yesterday, Gonzales said he could prove that they were fronts of the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed group, the New People's Army, adding that he would also push for their disqualification before the Commission on Elections.

President Macapagal-Arroyo had said earlier that Gonzales' allegation was the personal opinion of the adviser that he should prove.

Gonzales said he had evidence that Bayan Muna party-list Representatives Satur Ocampo, Crispin Beltran and Liza Maza channeled almost P500 million in pork barrel funds to "aid and abet the armed struggle of the NPA."

Gonzales read a list supposedly provided by "NPA insiders" saying the funds were used to buy vehicles, medical equipment and supplies, medicines, computers, radios, phones, scanners, cameras, decoders, mobile clinics, ambulances; and in setting up medical centers or clinics and barangay medical groups.

Rafael Mariano, Anakpawis national president urged the President to fire Gonzales, saying his charges were "spoiling the gains" of the recently resumed peace talks between the government and communist-led National Democratic Front.

In Iloilo City yesterday, Neri Colmenares, Bayan Muna legal counsel, said Gonzales committed gross negligence by accusing others without investigating how the projects were identified, funded and implemented.

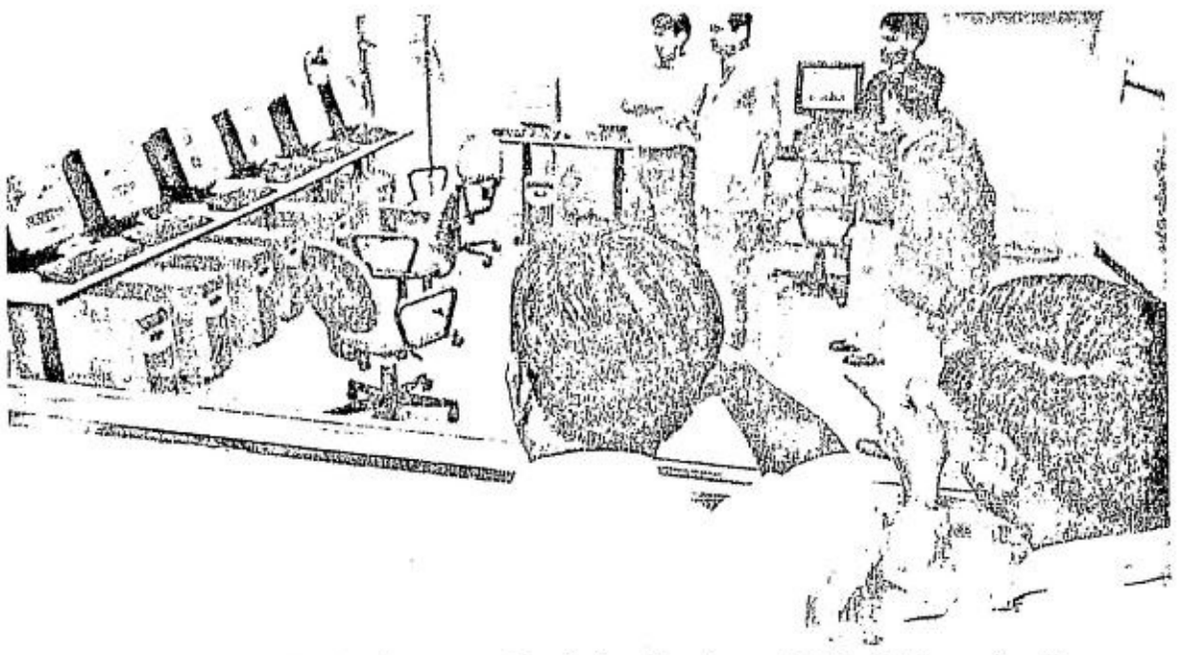
He said it was impossible for Bayan Muna to divert the funds to the NPA since the funds were released by the Budget Department to the Public Works Department and local government units, not to the three representatives.

Gonzales also violated the election law prohibiting public officials from engaging in partisan politics by continuously maligning the group, the lawyer said.

"It is a sweeping, ridiculous," said Iloilo Vice Gov. Roberto Armada. "I have seen many of their projects which have benefited the poor." Iloilo City Councilors Rita Bascos-Sarabia and Vicente Gengos Jr. said it was "easy to allege anything."

Alyansa ng Pag-Asa standard-bearer Raul Roco yesterday also demanded Gonzales' ouster "for single-handedly damaging the peace process."

Gonzales had been oblivious to the fact that the Anti-Subversion Law had been repealed, according to Roco who authored the law after it was certified as urgent by then President Fidel Ramos, meaning the National Democratic Front was now considered as above ground, and thus could participate in the political process. *Volt Contreras, Juliet L. Javellana, Nestor P. Burgos Jr., Michael L. Ubac and Martin P. Marfil*



CHAIR Benjamin Abalos (left, back to camera) and other Comelec and PMSI officials monitor the operation quick count test. ROGER MARGALLO

Fax beats satellite in Comelec test

By Martin P. Marfil

THE COMMISSION on Elections yesterday tested its unofficial quick-count system but this was roundly beaten by the "old-fashioned" fax machine.

Observers had to wait several hours for the results of the votes of 300 people from Baguio, Lipa and Bacolod cities, while faxed copies of the returns were received much earlier.

The Comelec, together with its partner Philippine Multi-Media System Inc., was testing the newly acquired P300-million satellite transmission system called Very Small Aperture Terminal or VSAT.

The first results of the test that came in were spewed out by a fax machine which printed the results of the Baguio voting.

As scheduled, the voting at the three sites was to start at 10 a.m., to be followed by the counting, encoding and the transmission of the results through VSAT.

The first VSAT results came in at 12:17 p.m. listing 30 votes from the two precincts in Baguio.

The Lipa results came in at 1:01 p.m. while that of Bacolod arrived at 1:39 p.m. Lipa had 46 voters while Bacolod had 100 voters.

The faxed document from Baguio had come in at 11:41 a.m.

But this was quickly downplayed by Renato Lim, programming manager of PMSI, who said: "We have not received any reports yet of any problems encountered. The process of encoding and transmission is ongoing right now. We'll have feedback in a couple of hours still..."

The results were received at the National Consolidation Center in Alabang, Muntinlupa City, where the test was conducted.

The Comelec expects the results—in the actual elections—to be known 36 hours after the counting.

But for Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos, the test was a "success."

"As sure as the sun rises in the east and sets in the west; that's how confident I am of our (system)," he said.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, April 7, 2004
Wednesday of Holy Week

1st Reading: Is 50:4-9
Gospel: Mt 26:14-25

One of the Twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went off to the chief priests and said, "How much will you give me if I hand him over to you?" They promised to give him thirty pieces of silver, and from then on he kept looking for the best way to hand him over to them.

On the first day of the Festival of the Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and said to him, "Where do you want us to prepare the Passover meal for you?" Jesus answered, "Go into the city, to the house of a certain man, and tell him: 'The Master says: My hour is near, and I will celebrate the Passover with my disciples in your house.'"

The disciples did as Jesus had ordered and prepared the Passover meal.

When it was evening, Jesus sat at table with the Twelve. While they were eating, Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you: one of you will betray me." They were deeply distressed and asked him in turn, "You do not mean me, do you, Lord?"

He answered, "He who will betray me is one of those who dips his bread in the dish with me. The Son of Man is going as the Scriptures say he will. But alas for that one who betrays the Son of Man; better for him not to have been born." Judas, who was betraying him, also asked, "You do not mean me, Master, do you?" Jesus replied, "You have said it."

Commentary

When Jesus said, "One of you will betray me," they were deeply distressed and asked him in turn, "You don't mean me, do you, Lord?" In other words, they conceived the possibility. Everyone is capable of the worst. It has been said that one of the great tragedies of war is that we continue to brand the other side as "the enemy," even long after the war is over. They remain the "bad" people, we the "good." That's why we fight another war and another: we never learn that we are all good and bad. Humanity reaches out to embrace the other because the other is a lost part of oneself. But we learn a habit of dualism early in life: teacher's pet requires that there be a bad boy in the class. The fact that Judas is present to us nearly every day of Holy Week means that we are to try his shoes for size. We are to step into the shoes of each person in this great drama, "the greatest story ever told."

Fr. Torres in 1998 made the perceptive remark that "Judas sold himself" for thirty pieces of silver. I found another writer of like mind:

"Still as of old. Men by themselves are priced
For thirty pieces Judas sold Himself, not Christ." (H.H. Cholmondeley)

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

REMEDIAL LAW (EVIDENCE)—Principles in review of rape cases—In reviewing rape cases, the court is guided by the following principles: (a) an accusation of rape can be made with facility; it is difficult to prove but more difficult for the person accused, though innocent, to disprove; (b) in view of the nature of the crime in which only two persons are involved, the testimony of the complainant must be scrutinized with extreme caution and (c) the evidence for the prosecution must stand or fall on its own merits and cannot be allowed to draw strength from the weakness of the evidence of the defense. The conviction or acquittal of an accused, therefore, depends almost entirely on the credibility of the victim's testimony since, by the intrinsic nature of this crime, it usually involves only two persons—the victim and the accused. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Corona, Third Division, People vs Darwin, G. R. Nos. 121731-33, November 12, 2003]

BY R. B. VERA

Government Warning:
Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health.

No witch-hunt against you, GMA assures Muslims

By Dennis Jay C. Santos, Rex G. Ortega, Aisha A. Echavez and Grace C. Albasin
PDI Mindanao Bureau

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo was to meet with Muslim leaders late last night to discuss complaints over alleged anti-Muslim bias in the crackdown against suspected terrorists, officials said.

"There is no hate campaign or witch-hunt directed against Muslims," the President said in a written statement.

Muslim leaders in Metro Manila had accused the government of targeting Muslim communities in its hunt for militants who allegedly plotted bombings in the metropolis. Six Muslim men, all alleged Abu Sayyaf guerrillas, were arrested last week.

Opposition critics had charged that the crackdown was motivated by Ms Macapagal's wish to project an image of toughness against terrorists ahead of the May 10 presidential elections.

The campaign "will continue to be carried out without any ethnic or religious bias, and with only the enforcement of impartial justice in mind," the President said.

Ms Macapagal's spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said she would be meeting with the Muslim leaders late Tuesday following threats by Muslim groups to march on the presidential palace.

The President had insisted the arrests stopped a series of bombings of shopping malls and trains.

At the same time, Muslims in major parts of Mindanao yesterday joined their brothers in Manila, led by actor Robin Padilla, in protesting the government's anti-terror drive that allegedly singled out followers of Islam.

In a rally in Davao City yesterday, Muslims accused the Macapagal administration of staging a scenario aimed at wrangling more funds from the United States.

"Philippine authorities have been trying to impress the US that there is terrorism here and the Muslims are being singled out," said Samer Allong, spokesperson of the United Youth of the Philippines (UNYPHIL).

Allong said his group has been condemning the way Muslims were being "abducted" by government forces on mere suspicion of terrorist ties.

Allong also accused Ms Macapagal of using the terror issue to propel her candidacy.

"Some of the abducted men were even tortured," Mohadjer Gawan, UNYPHIL Davao chapter president, said.

He said the authorities had no qualms about manhandling suspects even if there was no evidence against them.

Cabinbanan Mamukid, director of the Office of Muslim Affairs (OMA) for Southern Mindanao, said they were equally alarmed by the arrests because most of these were done without warrants.

"We are appealing to the President, her excellency's kindness, to see to it that fairness, justice, respect and human rights are accorded to all her constituents," Mamukid said.

Marites Carlas of Suara Bangsa Moro said the military has played a key role in the "abductions."

"Most Muslim males fear leaving their homes because they could become the next suspects," she said.

In Marawi City, the country's lone official Islamic city, residents said the government's anti-terror drive was racially and religiously discriminatory.

Hundreds of Maranaos trooped to the city center there to join a protest-cum-concert for peace, where a local band played emotional songs that drove protesters to tears. ***With an AFP report***

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Bus firm workers go on strike, stranding thousands

TARLAC CITY—At the onset of Holy Week, thousands of travelers on Philippine Rabbit Bus Lines were stranded in the company's terminals in Metro Manila and Central and Northern Luzon, after the firm's drivers and conductors refused to ply their routes on Tuesday.

The striking workers cited the alleged non-implementation of the provisions of a Dec. 18, 2002 memorandum of agreement on wages and benefits between workers and management.

The workers continued to defy the PRBL management's call to return to work despite an order from the Department of Labor and Employment and threats of a mass layoff.

Paul Viuya of the Nagkakaisang Manggagawa ng Tarlac said they expect the bus line's management to issue a memorandum warning of layoffs of union members who do not return to work.

The INQUIRER tried but failed to reach the PRBL management for comment. Rivo Nisce, head of the PRBL maintenance department, did not answer calls on Tuesday.

But in an interview last week, Nisce said talks with the workers were ongoing.

In 2002, PRBL employees staged a 50-day strike, crippling the bus company's operations and causing the firm to lose millions of pesos.

The strike ended only after the employees' union and management reached an agreement described by Nisce as "beneficial to both sides."

"No one wants to work because we are fed up. It is better to fight till the end even if it means losing our jobs than to return to work and face uncertainty," said an employee yesterday. The PRBL has about 130 buses.

Allan Bagtong, a mechanic and president of the Philippine Rabbit Bus Employees Union-Independent, claimed PRBL management continued to violate the terms of the MOA they had signed almost two years ago.

He said the union filed a notice of strike with the DOLE on March 12.

Bagtong, in a letter to PRBL management, listed a number of demands. Among these were the reinstatement of dismissed union officials, implementation of wage orders, payment of workers' rice subsidies from 2000 to the present, payment of half of their 13th-month pay due in December last year, and payment of their Social Security Systems and Pag-ibig Fund premiums. ***Russell Arador and Ronaldo Dizon, PDI Central Luzon Desk***

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Paracetamol tab 500 mg	✓ 0.60	2.45	1.85/tab
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Amoxicillin cap. 500 mg	✓ 3.70	15.75	12.05/cap
Amoxicillin susp. 250 mg/5 ml, 60 ml	✓ 45.10	144.00	98.90/bot
Ampicillin cap. 500 mg	✓ 6.50	14.15	7.65/cap
Chloramphenicol cap. 500 mg	✓ 3.20	37.75	34.55/cap
Chloramphenicol susp. 125 mg/5 ml 60 ml	✓ 40.40	394.75	354.35/bot
Co-trimoxazole tab (TM-160mg SMZ-800mg)	✓ 2.30	26.00	23.70/tab
Co-trimoxazole cap. (TM-80mg SMZ-400mg)	✓ 2.10	14.80	12.70/cap
Co-trimoxazole susp. (TM-40mg SMZ-200mg)	✓ 25.40	115.75	90.35/bot
Anti-cough (Para sa Ubo)			
Bromhexine HCl. syrup 4 mg/5 ml, 60 ml	✓ 25.40	74.75	49.35/bot
Carbocisteine cap. 500 mg	✓ 2.10	12.25	10.15/cap
Carbocisteine susp. 100 mg/5 ml, 60 ml	✓ 24.00	87.25	63.25/bot
Anti-diarrhea (Para sa Pagtatae)			
Loperamide cap. 2mg	✓ 1.10	10.25	9.15/cap

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Noli files libel raps vs accusers

LIBEL charges have been filed by vice presidential candidate Sen. Noli de Castro against two persons who had accused him earlier of biased reporting and extortion.

The suits were in the Pasay City prosecutor's office on Monday against Rafael Engle and Andrew Gonzales for "false, malicious and defamatory statements" made against De Castro.

"Every candidate is fair game. These two have tried to malign me because I am running for office," said De Castro, a consistent topnotcher in all surveys for the vice presidential race.

Engle had accused De Castro of airing a "wicked, terrible and biased" episode on the senator's television program "Magandang Gabi Bayan." He said the MGB crew had tried to extort money from him.

De Castro has denied the accusations, saying the MGB episode, aired on Sept. 30, 1995, was a fair and balanced report that was not about Engle but about his missing wife Daisy.

"We believe Daisy Engle was kidnapped by rogue elements with drug syndicate connections," said De Castro.

On the other hand, Gonzales, head of the Bagong Lahing Pilipino Development Foundation (formerly East Pacific AAA Foundation), alleged that De Castro's television program made up stories about him and his foundation after a failed blackmail attempt.

dti Bantay Bilihin PRICE MONITOR In Metro Manila

Bantay Bilihin is the Department of Trade and Industry's program that aims to address various components of price and supply stabilization. This price monitoring guide is the consumer's reference on the average prices of selected basic goods and prime commodities. The items listed below are some of the most common necessities we buy.

DTI and the Department of Agriculture monitor around 36 select markets in Metro Manila that are accessible and with heavy consumer traffic and trading activity

Prices in different markets may be higher or lower than the average price.

BASIC & PRIME COMMODITIES (Monitored by DTI)	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE	AVERAGE PRICE (As of April 02, 2004)	PRICE RANGE		AVERAGE PRICE A Month Ago (March 2004)
Canned Fish (155g)			7.00	10.00	
555	-	8.11			8.09
Youngstown	-	8.79			8.74
Hakata	-	8.14			8.12
Master	8.35	8.27			8.26
Ligo	-	8.43			8.42
Instant Noodles (Chicken/55g)			4.00	5.75	
Lucky Me	-	4.73			4.72
Maggi	5.25	5.16			5.15
Payless	-	4.34			4.35
Nissin's Ramon	-	4.98			4.98
Powdered Filled Milk (180g)			29.25	36.00	
Alaska	36.00	34.17			31.90
Bear Brand	36.00	34.34			32.23
Coffee (25g Refill)			10.75	15.50	
Blend 45	-	12.44			12.26
Nescafe	14.40	14.36			14.29
Café Puro	-	12.67			12.67
Great Taste	-	13.01			12.96
Laundry Soap (400g)			21.75	27.00	
Perla	24.00	24.28			24.20
Wheel	22.00	22.64			22.64
Detergent Bar (480g)			13.00	25.00	
Surf	14.20	14.74			14.74
Mr Clean	-	14.41			14.35
Tide	20.00	22.96			22.93
Breeze	23.95	23.38			23.35

COMMODITY (Monitored by DA-BAS)	AVERAGE PRICE (April 03, 2004)	AVERAGE PRICE A Week Ago (March 27, 2004)	AVERAGE PRICE A Month Ago (March 2004)
Meat and Poultry			
Beef Brisket (per kilo)	143.68	143.68	143.68
Egg (Medium/per piece)	3.59	3.59	3.57
Fish (per kilo)			
Bangus	90.28	93.20	93.38
Tilapia	72.00	70.20	70.19
Galunggong	65.73	74.30	74.51
Rice (per kilo)			
Ordinary	18.61	18.61	18.65
Special	22.41	22.39	22.44
Premium	25.60	25.60	25.71
Fancy	32.76	32.62	32.70
Sugar (per kilo)			
Refined	26.53	26.48	26.55
Brown	22.40	22.42	22.58

MEAT AND POULTRY (Monitored by DA-BAI)	FARMGATE PRICE As of April 03, 2004 (Price per Kilo)	WHOLESALE PRICE As of April 03, 2004 (Price per Kilo)	AVERAGE RETAIL PRICE As of April 03, 2004 (Price per Kilo)
Chicken (Dressed)	58.00	73.75	88.83
Pork (Liempo)	87.69	113.20	142.96

CEMENT (40kg Bag)	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE (Pick Up & Cash Price per Bag as of March, 2004)	AVERAGE PRICE (Pick Up & Cash Price per Bag as of Mar 19, 2004)
Island	125.00	120.00
Union	125.00	131.00

For inquiries, write or call:
DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY
Bureau of Trade Regulation and Consumer Protection
2/F Trade and Industry Building, 361 Gen. J. Puyat Ave., Makati City 1200
Tel.: 8977-DTI • Website: www.dti.gov.ph • Text: Type DTI <space><your message>send to 2920
For Meat and Poultry, call the Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Animal Industry- 920-3906
For other Agricultural Commodities, call the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics-371-2078

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War video cited

A VIDEO documentary on Filipino soldiers of World War II produced by the Department of National Defense with Infinit-1 Communications Services won the Award of Excellence in the Public Relations Tools Category at the recent 39th Anvil Awards of the Public Relations Society of the Philippines.

The documentary, "Legacy of Heroes: The Story of Bataan and Corregidor," also named the Best TV Documentary of 2003 by the Catholic Mass Media Awards, highlights the pivotal role of Filipino soldiers in Bataan and Corregidor in stalling the advance of the Japanese Imperial Army in 1942.

The documentary was produced by a seasoned team led by Sony J. Jalandoni, Infinit-1 CEO and award-winning director Butch Nolasco. The script was written by Prof. Ricardo T. Jose, an authority on World War II, and editor-writer Ruben V. Tangco.

Palace tells Ho welcomer to explain

MALACAÑANG has ordered presidential assistant on foreign investments Dan Roleda to explain why he met with Macau gaming mogul Stanley Ho without the palace's green light.

Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo said his office was reviewing the propriety of a government official like Roleda welcoming Ho, the controversial casino operator whose entry into the Philippines was blunted by Church protests during the administration of Joseph Estrada.

Roleda has the same rank as a department undersecretary and was appointed by President Macapagal-Arroyo only last month, a few days before Ho's arrival at Clark Field, Pampanga, to receive an honorary degree from the Angeles University Foundation. Romulo said Roleda's appointment was also under review.

There was speculation that Ho met with Ms Macapagal during his short visit to Clark.

Malacañang has firmly denied the President met with Ho or that the latter had made a contribution to her campaign chest. *Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

Reyes says bad guys behind murder raps

By Alcuin Papa

EMBATTLED anti-kidnapping and anti-smuggling czar Angelo Reyes said yesterday smugglers were behind the recent rash of murder charges against him.

In an interview over ANC yesterday, Reyes said defending himself from the accusations was taking up a lot of his time.

"Undoubtedly there is an organized, synchronized, well-funded effort to discredit the efforts of the administration to address the kidnapping and smuggling issues," said Reyes, who heads both the National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force (Naktf) and the National Anti-Smuggling Task Force (Nastf).

Reyes said the smugglers' syndicates were well-funded, theorizing that "maybe they are funding this (demolition job) also." He also said the syndicates had certain media men and lawyers in their pockets but he declined to identify them.

Reyes said he was the prime target of the demolition job because both Naktf and Nastf had made significant gains against kidnapping and smuggling groups.

Last week, Lorna Justine Ramoso, wife of kidnapping suspect Rogelio Ramoso who was killed by Naktf agents last December in Mabitac, Laguna, filed charges against Reyes, anti-crime advocate Tessie Ang-See, administration vice presidential bet Noli de Castro and police officials for the alleged abduction and killing of her husband.

Ramoso said her husband was a member of Naktf who had been ordered by Reyes to stage abductions. De Castro was included in the charges for allegedly covering up the abduction and murder of her husband.

Naktf officials, however, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the opposition Koalisyon ng Nagakakaisang Pilipino (KNP) was behind the demolition job against Reyes in order to weaken the vice presidential bid of De Castro.

Pyramid scam suspect falls

POLICE arrested Monday the alleged right-hand man of pyramid scam suspect Rose Baladjay in Quezon City.

William Dy Sy had long been wanted for syndicated estafa for his alleged role in Baladjay's Multitel Corp., which allegedly duped some 50,000 investors of around P15 billion in a supposed pyramid scam.

Chief Supt. Arturo Lomibao, Criminal Investigation and Detection Group director, identified Sy as Baladjay's "direct agent" in the "business."

CIDG operatives got their break when a victim volunteered information on Sy, said Senior Supt. Nicasio Radovan, commander of CIDG's Task Force Moses.

Radovan said the unidentified victim revealed that Sy was trying to secure a P50-million loan from a bank using the suspect's properties in San Pablo City as collateral.

Sy was taken to the Makati city jail where he joined Baladjay who has been held there since her own arrest last year. *C. V. Esguerra*

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GETTING EVEN: Government witness Maria Fe Rosadeno, one of the kidnap victims, slaps Abdusaid Sanjeng Lim. JOAN BONDOC

ALLEGED terrorists from the Abu Sayyaf are presented to the media at Camp Crame by defense department official Ricardo Blancaflor and PNP Director General Hermogenes Ebdane. Behind are the suspects, from left, Alhamser Manatad Limbong, Redendo Cain Dellosa, Radzman Sangkula Jul, Abdusaid Sanjeng Lim, Walter Villanueva and Marvin Rueca. JOAN BONDOC

Embassies, malls ...

From page A1

bus terminals and seaports.

Delfin said the bombing plan was aborted with the arrest of Kosovo and his five cohorts and the confiscation of about 40 kilos of TNT, bomb-making equipment and a number of firearms.

But he said he was not discounting the "possibility" that a new Abu Sayyaf cell would be formed and sent to Metro Manila to implement the plan. However, he added, "it would take them a long time to regroup after the successful police operation."

PNP Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. had earlier said the arrest of Kosovo et al. prevented a terrorist attack on the scale of the train bombings in Madrid last March 11.

Religious edicts

The Associated Press quoted government officials and terrorism experts as saying that religious edicts from al-Qaida leaders and anger over the US occupation of Iraq were more likely behind a rash of bombings around the world than direct orders from Osama bin Laden's organization.

And the string of blasts—from Madrid to Tashkent to Manila—may be fueling momentum for more attacks from like-minded terror groups including the Abu Sayyaf, raising concerns for the US handover in Iraq, the Athens Olympics and upcoming elections in Europe, Asia and the United States.

Officials said they likely averted major bombings with the arrest of the members of the Abu Sayyaf cell and the confiscation of TNT in Manila and 450 kg of ammonium nitrate, a fertilizer compound frequently used as a bomb ingredient, in London.

Decentralized

There's no evidence of a worldwide terror organization or that al-Qaida is calling the shots, perhaps even setting off the wave of violence with key words or phrases in messages from the network's top leaders, officials and terrorism experts told AP.

"If only it were that simple," said Magnus Ranstorp, director for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. "There is still a belief that all of these activities are coordinated by an omnipresence of al-Qaida from above, and that is simply not the case."

Al-Qaida is thought to be decentralized now with Bin Laden and other leaders on the run since 2001. While it may be working on a big operation like another 9/11, "you have a second tier of local atomized cells working away on their own time scale and their own initiative, carrying out different activities," Ranstorp said.

"Sometimes they are linked, but often they are not," he said.

Ongoing war

In Manila, Senior Supt. Rodolfo Mendoza, who has done extensive research on Asian Muslim extremist groups, said such fatwas had pitted Islamic extremists against the West.

"It means there is an ongoing war," said Mendoza. "If we say that there is a war on terrorism, they say there is a war on infidels."

National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales had this to say: "We're seeing a new kind of fanaticism in the world. You're seeing the coming together of like-minded twisted minds."

Former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said the March 11 commuter train bombings that killed 191 people in Madrid illustrated how terrorists want to "hit back in some way" against Washington and its allies.

"The war in Iraq has worsened the terrorism problem," Mahathir told the AP. "By attacking the Iraqis, you enlarge the front and add enemies to yourself."

Trigger

If there is a trigger, it's anti-American, anti-Western sentiments among militant Muslims, a US counterterrorism official said.

In addition to the occupation of Iraq, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has fueled anger against Washington, which is seen as pro-Israel. And religious edicts, called fatwas, from Bin Laden and other al-Qaida officials have encouraged attacks on Americans and their allies.

Four jailed Malaysians said Friday that attacks against churches and other targets in Southeast Asia—including the bombings in Bali that killed 202 people in 2002—were inspired by a fatwa issued by Bin Laden.

The edict told Muslims to kill "Americans wherever they are, irrespective of whether they are armed or not, whether they are soldiers or civilians or women, elderly people or children," said Mohamed Nasir Abbas, one of four men interviewed by Malaysia's TV3. *With an AP report*

US wants Abu suspect extradited ...

From page A1

Metro Manila. *(See banner story below.)*

The bureau received the extradition request on Alhamzer Manatad Limbong, alias Kosovo, signed by US legal attaché Jeffrey Cole, from the Department of Justice yesterday, NBI Interpol chief Ricardo Diaz told reporters.

But Kosovo will not be sent to the United States just yet because he is facing charges here of kidnapping for ransom, murder and illegal possession of firearms and explosives, Diaz said.

The US government wants Kosovo so he can stand trial for the 2001 kidnapping of Americans Guillermo Sobero and Martin and Gracia Burnham from the Dos Palmas Resort in Palawan, and for the subsequent killing of Sobero and Martin. But Diaz said it would have to wait for the local cases against Kosovo to be resolved.

Gracia Burnham is expected back in the Philippines to testify against four of the six suspected Abu Sayyaf members, state prosecutor Nestor Lazaro said.

"She'll be here by the middle of the year," Lazaro told reporters at Camp Crame. "We're just taking the testimony of local witnesses first."

According to Diaz, the extradition request is "merely a formality" because Kosovo is facing charges here. "The local charges will take precedence over those filed by the US," the lawyer said.

At the US court for the District of Columbia, Kosovo is also facing a charge of conspiracy to commit hostage-taking, resulting in the death and murder of a US national, among others, for the Dos Palmas abductions.

He has been indicted along with Khadafi Janjalani, Isnilon Totoni Hapilon, Aldam Itlao, Jainal Antel Sali Jr., Hamsiraji Marusi Sali, Wahar Opao, Bakkal Totoni Hapilon and Abdul Azzam Ngaya. (Their names are spelled thus in the NBI press statement based on US documents.)

According to Diaz, the extradition request also signifies that Kosovo may not be as innocent as claimed by those protesting his and the five other men's arrest.

No visible marks

"We are [making public the extradition request] so that people won't jump to the conclusion that these arrested people are innocent," Diaz said, adding that if one of the arrested men was facing charges in the United States, it could mean that they were not just fall guys, as some groups had alleged.

At Camp Crame, officials presented the six alleged Abu Sayyaf members to the media in an effort to dispel suspicion that they had been tortured into admitting a supposed plan to launch a "Madrid-type" bomb attack in Metro Manila.

Kosovo and the others—Redendo Cain Dellosa, Radzman Sangkula Jul, Abdusaid Sanjeng Lim alias Abu Hanipa, Walter Villanueva and Marvin Rueca—showed no visible marks to suggest that they had been tortured, as claimed by relatives and fellow Muslims.

"We presented them to dispel doubts that the arrests were stage-managed," Chief Supt. Ismael Rafanan told reporters in Filipino after the press conference. "You see ... they were accorded legal rights. The arrests were honest-to-goodness operations to protect the welfare of the people."

Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr., chief of the Philippine National Police, shot down suggestions that the PNP was cracking down on members of the Muslim community.

"Just because some Muslims were arrested doesn't mean all Muslims are involved [in terrorist activities]," he said at the press conference. "We have to return to the evidence. We are actually targeting a specific group."

The NBI's Diaz said agents of the US Federal Bureau of Investigation would come to Manila to check if the men arrested along with Kosovo were among those indicted earlier in the United States of involvement in the Dos Palmas kidnappings.

Government witnesses

Six government witnesses showed up at the press conference and identified the arrested men as among their abductors.

Trembling, Maria Fe Rosadeno slapped suspect Lim in the presence of Ebdane and other top police, military and justice officials. Angie Montealegre was restrained hitting Lim and the others.

Buddy Recio and his wife Divina identified Kosovo and company as part of the Abu Sayyaf team behind the Dos Palmas kidnappings and the siege of Lamitan, Basilan, days later.

Three Americans and 17 Filipinos were taken by the Abu Sayyaf from the resort in Palawan on May 27, 2001. Most of the Filipinos were later released after their families paid ransom, but Sobero, a California resident, was beheaded.

The Burnhams, both missionaries, were among the last hostages held by the Abu Sayyaf along with nurse Edibora Yap. Martin Burnham and Yap were killed in 2002 in a military rescue operation in Mindanao.

Recio, who was among those freed earlier, had testified during an inquiry that he paid P1 million for the release of Montealegre, his sister-in-law.

Ronald Ulla, the Filipino kidnapped with a number of foreigners from the Sipadan island resort in Malaysia in 2000, was also present to implicate the arrested men.

Ask Robin

Recio, Montealegre and Rosadeno went to the Department of Justice to protest suggestions that the arrested men were fall guys.

A travel magazine publisher, Recio said actor Robin Padilla "should know Kosovo, and probably Hanipa [Lim] because he went up there."

He said Kosovo was at the Abu Sayyaf camp in Basilan when the actor went there in April 2000 in an attempt to negotiate the release of students who had been taken hostage.

Padilla, a convert to Islam, has joined other Muslims in protesting the raids on Muslim communities as well as plans to impose an ID system on Muslims in Metro Manila.

And should Padilla deny the arrested men, Recio said: "Well, that I cannot understand. That's why we are somewhat hurt. *Parang medyo napikon* that our efforts to identify them are being belittled.

"It's not that easy to identify them, you know. Kosovo even shaved his beard, but he was still captured. *Walang lusot sila* (They can't escape)."

Said Montealegre: "That's why we are here—to affirm that these arrested Abu Sayyaf members were the same ones we saw in Basilan and who held us for six months."

Sweating but smiling

Recio described Kosovo as a hardened bandit who attacked an armored personnel carrier with a recoilless rifle during the Lamitan siege on June 2, 2001, killing a military lieutenant.

"He came back sweating but he was smiling," Recio said.

Kosovo is said to be the second cousin of fugitive Abu Sayyaf leader Khadaffy Janjalani. He has also been linked to the 2002 bombing in Malagutay, Zamboanga City, where an American soldier was killed.

Recio and Montealegre said it was Kosovo who entered their rooms when the bandits raided the Dos Palmas resort.

"Kosovo barged into our room with four [other bandits]. We can't forget his face because he was one of those who barged in, and he was very visible," Recio said, adding:

"He was very involved in our incarceration. Like, he asked us when we were in the speedboat if we knew them. He was also the one I talked to first when I tried to negotiate for the release of my son RJ."

Rosadeno said it was Kosovo who ordered the three resort staff members they left behind to tell the military not to attempt any rescue or the hostages would be killed.

She said Kosovo was among those who killed Sobero. "He was the one who tied Guillermo's feet and hands. He also hit Guillermo in the body with a rifle."

'All the same'

Recio said Kosovo was some sort of a "sub-commander" of the Abu Sayyaf, but was "very low-key."

He said the Abu Sayyaf members were "all the same" in their cruelty.

"They'll give you food because you're part of their business. If they don't feed you and you die, they'll have no more ransom. It's as simple as that," Recio said.

"As regards their credo of being a separatist movement, I don't think they're like that. For me, they're a kidnap-for-ransom group. They're terrorists," he added.

State prosecutor Lazaro said Kosovo was known as "The Engineer" among his victims and was the "most ruthless" of the six arrested men.

"Even prior to his arrest, he was being mentioned by witnesses as Sayyaf," Lazaro said, referring to another supposed alias of Kosovo's.

He said local witnesses had identified Kosovo as the one who beheaded two teachers the Abu Sayyaf had abducted along with 43 others from four schools in Sumisip, Basilan, on March 20, 2000, and who executed Fr. Rhoel Gallardo on May 3, 2000.

Gallardo was among those kidnapped when the Abu Sayyaf stormed the Tumahubong East Elementary School, Sinangkapan Elementary School, Sinangkapan National High School and Claret High School.

Mark Jalandoni, head of the DOJ Witness Protection Program, said the government had around 10 witnesses to testify against the arrested men.

Fading RP vets fight longest war

From page A1

membering those who had died.

In her remarks commemorating Bataan Day or Araw ng Kagitingan, which falls on Good Friday, the President said that in remembering the sacrifices of those who died in the infamous Death March, the Filipino people must strive to work for peace, not only in society but also in their hearts.

But for many of the veterans now in their late 70s and 80s, the remembrance will be tinged with lingering bitterness toward the country under whose flag they fought—the United States.

Drafted into service by US President Franklin Roosevelt to fight under the American flag in July 1941, the young Filipino volunteers say they were promised the same benefits as their American comrades. But five years later, the Rescission Act of 1946 sailed through the US Senate and removed their entitlements.

Retired Col. Rafael Estrada, now 87, remembers all too clearly when the order came to report for duty. "We were not being called to defend the Commonwealth of the Philippines or its president, Manuel Quezon, but to defend the United States, its flag and its Constitution.

"Within weeks, some 100,000 young men had answered the call. I will always remember being told equal pay for equal risk," he said. "When the Japanese invaded we were far from prepared for it. But we fought them every inch of the way. In the end, low on rations, low on ammunition ... Gen. Edward King, who had become our commanding officer, surrendered."

Just before noon on April 9, 1942, the guns fell silent over the Bataan peninsula on the northern shores of Manila Bay.

What remained of the 80,000-strong US forces in the Philippines would then endure the notorious Bataan Death March—a 100-km march to the Camp O'Donnell concentration camp in Pampanga through blistering heat with barely any food and water.

An estimated 5,000 troops died in the three-day march and some 23,000 young American and Filipino soldiers perished in the weeks and months that followed the surrender.

Estrada recalls: "It was incredibly hot. We had little food and little water and men just dropped to the side of the road and died. We couldn't do anything. We couldn't stop to help them or we would be killed. We just kept on walking. When we got to San Fernando they packed us into freight cars, jammed us in like animals for the trip to the Camp O'Donnell concentration camp. You can never imagine what it was like. Young men suffocating to death right in front of you. They died standing up.

2 bills in US Congress

"Then we had to endure the diseases that infested the camp. In time, we Filipinos were released, but not before some 23,000 American and Filipino soldiers had died either in the camps or on the march itself."

At present, there are two bills pending in the US Congress relating to the Filipino veterans. One would restore full benefits to all veterans and the other would pay veterans a pension of $100 a month.

According to Estrada, chairman and founder of the Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor, about 5,000 veterans from the Bataan campaign are still alive today, although less than 2,000 are registered.

Wenceslao Rodriquez has spent the last 57 years fighting for his benefits. According to the US Army Records Center, Rodriquez does not exist, despite having been awarded two medals by the US Army.

Truman's letter

The US government did grant veterans who qualified US citizenship and recently, medical benefits to those veterans living in the Unite States.

The US government has also given some $2 million to the veterans' medical center.

Noteworthy also—if nothing else but in recognition of their brave sacrifice—is a letter written by former US President Harry Truman to the president of the US Senate on May 18, 1946: "The standing Philippine Army was made a part of the armed forces of the United States by the president's order of July 26, 1941. Certain guerrillas, who so courageously carried on the war against the enemy after the fall of the Philippines, were recognized as members of the Philippine army, hence a part of the army of the United States.

"The record of the Philippine soldier for bravery and loyalty is second to none. Their assignment was as bloody and difficult as any other American soldier. Under desperate circumstances, they acquitted themselves nobly."

Estrada counts himself lucky to have survived. "I am grateful for what the US military has given me throughout my military career ... very grateful. But everyone who fought for the American flag is entitled to the benefits that were promised."

However, he reflects: "We have bills before Congress now trying to reverse the decision made in 1946. Many of those congressmen have never been to war ... they probably have never heard of Bataan."

Spirit of Capas

In Capas, President Macapagal said the people should think of ways to achieve peace and prosperity, of how to make sacrifices and of how to care and serve one's fellowmen.

"This is the spirit of Capas. This is the spirit of the Bataan Death March. This is the spirit of the Lenten season," she said.

The President recalled the heroism, and sacrifices of the thousands of Filipinos who marched the 155 km from Mariveles in Bataan to Capas in Tarlac in the sweltering heat with no water and shelter.

She said the Death March did not actually end in death but in triumph "because we won the war and this was the beginning of a new hope for change." *AFP*

Gov't, private sector agree ...

From page A1

have "strongly collaborated" to avoid a repeat of the crippling brownouts of the early 90s.

Perez assured the public that the country had enough power reserves to meet current and future power demand.

"For the past few months, energy officials upon the direction of President Macapagal have been meeting with various sectors to inform them of the needed power infrastructure to fuel our growing economy," Perez said.

In Malacañang, presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said the President concurred with the DOE's view that there was an "oversupply" of power and that the government was only preparing for any eventuality should demand outstrip supply in the future.

In his meeting with Perez, Lopez also made a presentation on the likely scenario for the power industry if nothing concrete was done now.

Lopez said that the energy officials' reactions to his presentation on a looming power crisis were "generally positive."

"I guess a lot of them had a recognition that there are issues that need fixing. The sooner that we do it, the better for our country," he told the INQUIRER.

Mistrust high

In his outlook on the power industry, Lopez earlier blamed the government's "unstable" regulatory environment, specifically its bias for consumers in setting power rates, as the main deterrent for the lack of investor interest in building new power plants that the country needs to avert a nationwide power crisis by 2007.

Lopez noted that the "government had given in to the populist tide," citing the reduction in the PPA (purchased power adjustment) and the capping of electricity prices which have destroyed the National Power Corp.'s revenue base.

He urged a "level-headed dialogue and coordination among players, regulators and government" considering that the "mistrust is high."

Francis Chua, executive vice president of the Federation of Filipino Chinese Chambers of Commerce, brushed off concerns of an impending power crisis, saying that "Perez should know the real score."

Chua said that demand for power had eased because power-intensive industries had relocated to other countries with cheaper power rates.

Philexport chair Sergio Ortiz-Luis said that most businessmen were not overly concerned about the return of blackouts in the country because the government had assured them that it was on top of the situation.

But Ortiz-Luis said that how the next administration would set power rates would be critical in the decision of investors to build new power plants here. He said that if the government did not give investors a fair return on their investments, "no money would come to the power industry."

Additional capacity needed

Lopez estimated that Luzon would need an additional capacity of 700 megawatts (MW) by 2007 to maintain a safe 20-percent power reserve in the area.

As of 2003, peak load—or actual volume of power in Luzon—was placed at around 6,000 MW. This should increase to somewhere under 7,000 MW this year but would shoot up to around 8,000 MW by 2007 if actual demand was met with enough capacity to serve as reserve power.

Demand by that time for the whole of Luzon should reach around 10,000 MW, he said.

In the Visayas and the Cebu-Negros-Panay (CNP) grids, additional capacity should have been in place as early as last year to prevent a power crisis.

Peak load on the CNP grid last year was placed at around 800 MW, already intersecting the available capacity there. Between then and the end of the year, the island groups could experience more power outages as the 20-percent reserve requirement would no longer be maintained.

Cebu, in particular, is currently experiencing daily power outages because of inadequate power.

In Mindanao, Lopez said, additional capacity should also have been in place as early as last year as peak load then at around 1,100 MW already intersected dependable capacity.

Lopez said it would take around four to five years to finance and build new plants so the government should act now to prevent power crises in different parts of the country.

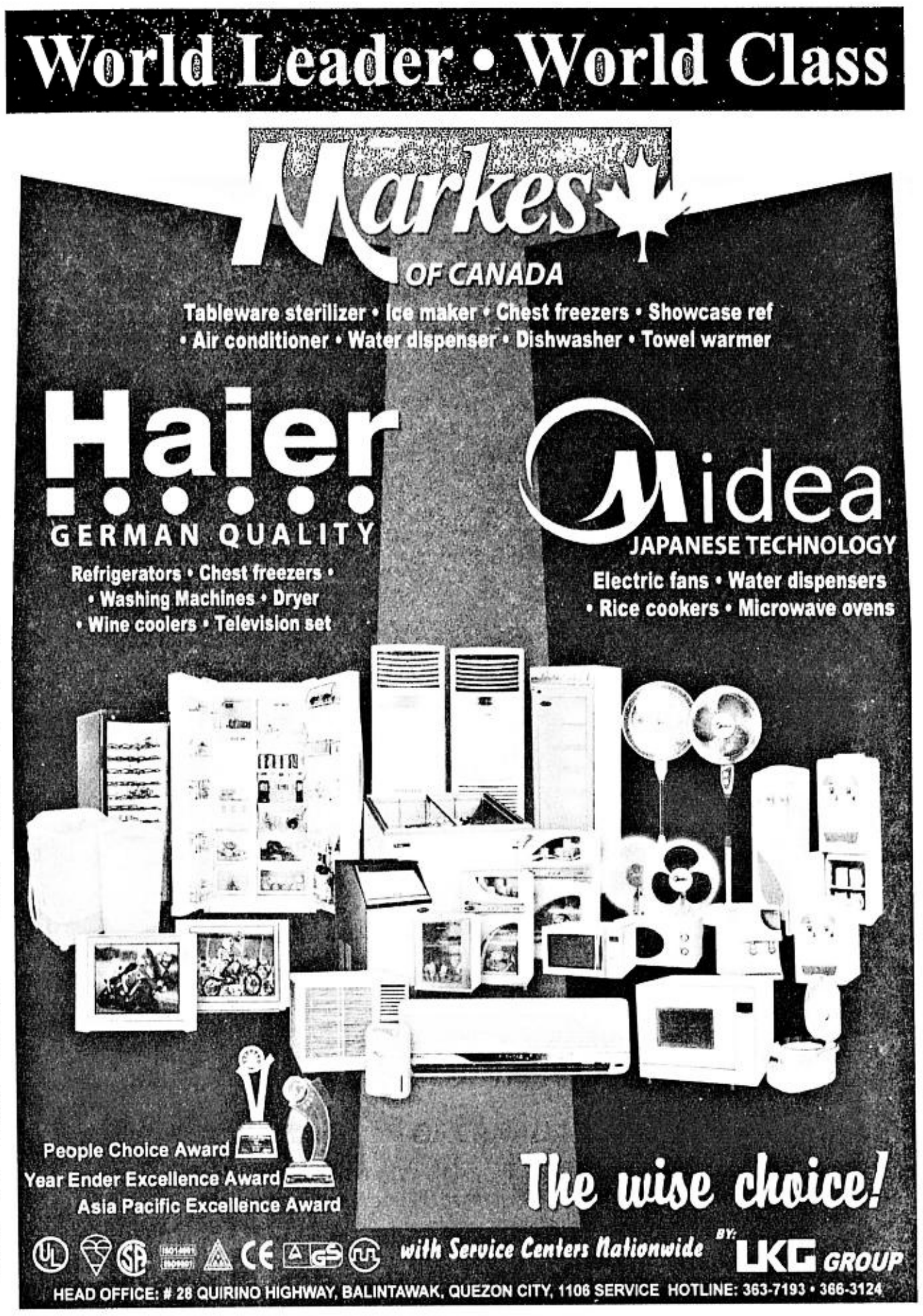
Supply-demand data

The environmentalist group World Wildlife Foundation has proposed that regional energy planning sessions be conducted to ensure that data on the supply-and-demand situation in each of the regional grids would be more accurate.

The group said the exercise should include the Department of Energy, the business sector, local government units, distribution utilities and even civil society organizations.

Senatorial candidate Juan Ponce Enrile branded as suspicious the warning raised by the Lopez group of an impending power crisis.

Enrile said it appeared to be intended to scare the public and the government into accepting what would most likely be more sweetheart deals for the Lopez-owned Meralco.



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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7, 2004

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Al-Qaida threatens more attacks vs Spain

MADRID—Spain said on Monday it had arrested one more suspect in connection with the Madrid train bombings and ramped up security nationwide to allay fears of further attacks, amid a reported threat of more carnage.

Police said the latest suspect was a Moroccan, who had been detained on April 2 in Ceuta, a Spanish enclave in north Africa bordering Morocco. Their information contradicted earlier reports that two arrests had been made on Saturday.

The authorities were taking no chances on Monday, tightening security in the wake of a police raid in a southern Madrid suburb on Saturday, in which the alleged mastermind of the March 11 train attacks blew himself up along with four accomplices.

To add to the nervous atmosphere following the March 11 bombings and the five suicides on Saturday, ABC newspaper said on Monday it had received a letter purporting to be from Al-Qaida warning Spain to withdraw its forces immediately from Iraq and Afghanistan or face "hellish" consequences.

"If these demands are not met, we will declare war on you and turn your country into a hell where blood will flow in rivers. This is our last warning," the statement read.

Anti-terrorist forces increased surveillance across the country on Monday.

Security personnel were put on patrol in the Madrid metro and the capital's Madrid-Barajas international airport, where the army joined police to effect what the authorities described as an "exceptional" operation.

Passengers at the airport were subjected to body searches and cars leaving it were checked before being allowed on their way.

The Spanish air force also upped controls over national airspace, in an unprecedented operation coordinated from the Torrejon de Ardoz military base north of Madrid.

Madrid Mayor Alberto Ruiz-Gallardon said the interior ministry had, for the first time, deployed municipal police on the city's metro system.

At Nuevos Ministerios station, on the line leading to the airport, a pre check-in luggage system was suspended for security reasons.

The media said Spain's nuclear reactors were also under closer surveillance.

Just after 8:30 p.m. on Monday, hundreds of residents of Leganes, the suburb where the five suspects blew themselves up rather than surrender to police, began a demonstration against terrorism.

Similar demonstrations were expected in several other cities later in the evening, an echo of the massive rallies held the day after the Madrid bombings.

Investigators probing the country's worst extremist attack, which killed 191 people, believe it may have been carried out by the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (GICM), said to be linked to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network.

They are examining the possibility that some suspects might have escaped Saturday's police raid in Leganes and taken explosives with them.

Judicial officials said on Monday autopsies had revealed the identities of four of the five suspects who killed themselves after being cornered by police in Leganes.

They included the presumed mastermind of the bombings—Serhane Ben Abdelmajid Fakhet, known as "the Tunisian"—and Jamal Ahmidan, a Moroccan believed to have been the leader of the bombing team.

Another key suspect, Moroccan Jamal Zougam, is in custody facing provisional charges of murder and terrorism along with 14 other detainees.

The other two bodies identified after Saturday's raid were those of Moroccan pair Abdennabi Kounjaa and Asri Rifat Anouar, the latter's name surfacing in the inquiry for the first time. *AFP*

Los Angeles Times leads Pulitzers with 5 awards

THE LOS ANGELES Times won five Pulitzer Prizes on Monday, dominating this year's competition with writing that included criticism, editorials and breaking-news coverage of the wildfires that devastated Southern California last fall.

The five prizes were the second-highest number of awards won by a single newspaper since the awards were first given in 1917. The New York Times won seven in 2002, mostly on the strength of its reporting of the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. Other than in that unusual year, the most Pulitzer Prizes any other paper has won in a single year is three.

The New York Times won the public service award Monday for articles written by David Barstow and Lowell Bergman, detailing deaths and injuries among American workers and showing how employers broke basic safety rules with impunity. The submission was moved from the Investigative Reporting category, where it had been named a finalist, by the board that administers the awards for Columbia University.

The Wall Street Journal won two prizes: one for explanatory reporting, for a series examining aneurysms, by Kevin Helliker and Thomas M. Burton; and another for beat reporting, for Daniel Golden's look into admission preferences given to the children of alumni and donors at American colleges.

The Washington Post won in the international reporting category for Anthony Shadid's dispatches from Iraq, and the prize for investigative journalism went to The Blade of Toledo, Ohio, for its series on atrocities committed by Tiger Force, an elite volunteer Army unit, during the Vietnam War. The Miami Herald won the commentary award for columns by Leonard Pitts Jr. *NYT*

DALLAS Morning News photographers David J. Leeson (center) and Cheryl Diaz Meyer (right) celebrate after being named winners of the 2004 Pulitzer Prize for breaking news photography in Dallas April 5. The two photographers were honored for their work covering the war in Iraq. REUTERS

Firebomb damages Jewish school in Montreal

TORONTO—A fire destroyed library books and damaged a library computer system at a Montreal Jewish elementary school on the eve of the Passover holiday, and police found anti-Semitic notes taped to the school's walls.

Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin said the United Talmud Torahs school, which was closed at the time of the blaze Monday, was firebombed.

Montreal police spokesperson Yves Surprenant refused to say how the blaze started or provide details about the notes' contents, except to say they were signed by an unknown organization.

Surprenant said it was "the most deplorable act" he has seen in 24 years on the force.

"What was written on the notes really told us it was a hate crime," he said.

Quebec's French-language TVA television network reported that the notes denounced recent Israeli attacks against Palestinians, including the killing of Sheik Ahmed Yassin, founder of the Islamic Hamas movement. *AP*

1.2M die on the road yearly—UN

WASHINGTON—Traffic accidents kill 1.2 million people worldwide each year, the equivalent of wiping out the entire population of Dallas or Copenhagen, Denmark. But unlike diseases such as AIDS or malaria, there's no international clamor for a cure.

"There's a kind of fatalism," said Dr. Etienne Krug, the director of injuries and violence prevention for the World Health Organization, the United Nations' health agency. "People don't act on it in part because they think, 'Well, society has to modernize. That will mean we'll have more cars, we'll have more roads, and therefore the price to pay is that people will be killed or injured.'"

The organization wants to combat that attitude with a yearlong focus on traffic safety. This Wednesday, the agency will release recommendations for improving traffic safety at a kickoff in Paris. Events are planned for that day on six continents, including the launch of a school program to promote bike helmets in Thailand and free eye exams for drivers in Nigeria.

The WHO estimates that by 2020, traffic accidents will kill 2.3 million people annually and will be the third-leading cause of death behind heart disease and depression. In 1998, traffic accidents were the ninth-leading cause of death, behind AIDS, diarrhea, malaria and other illnesses.

Traffic accidents kill people in different ways depending on the region. In high-income countries such as the United States, where 42,815 people died in road accidents in 2003, accidents most often kill drivers and passengers, and pedestrians represent about 12 percent of deaths. *AP*

China asserts control over Hong Kong

BEIJING/HONG KONG—China stamped its authority on Hong Kong on Tuesday, ruling that it alone would decide if the territory needed electoral reform.

Many in Hong Kong called the widely expected ruling a crushing blow to hopes of democracy, although financial markets were unruffled and there was little sign of tension in the former British colony handed back to Beijing in 1997.

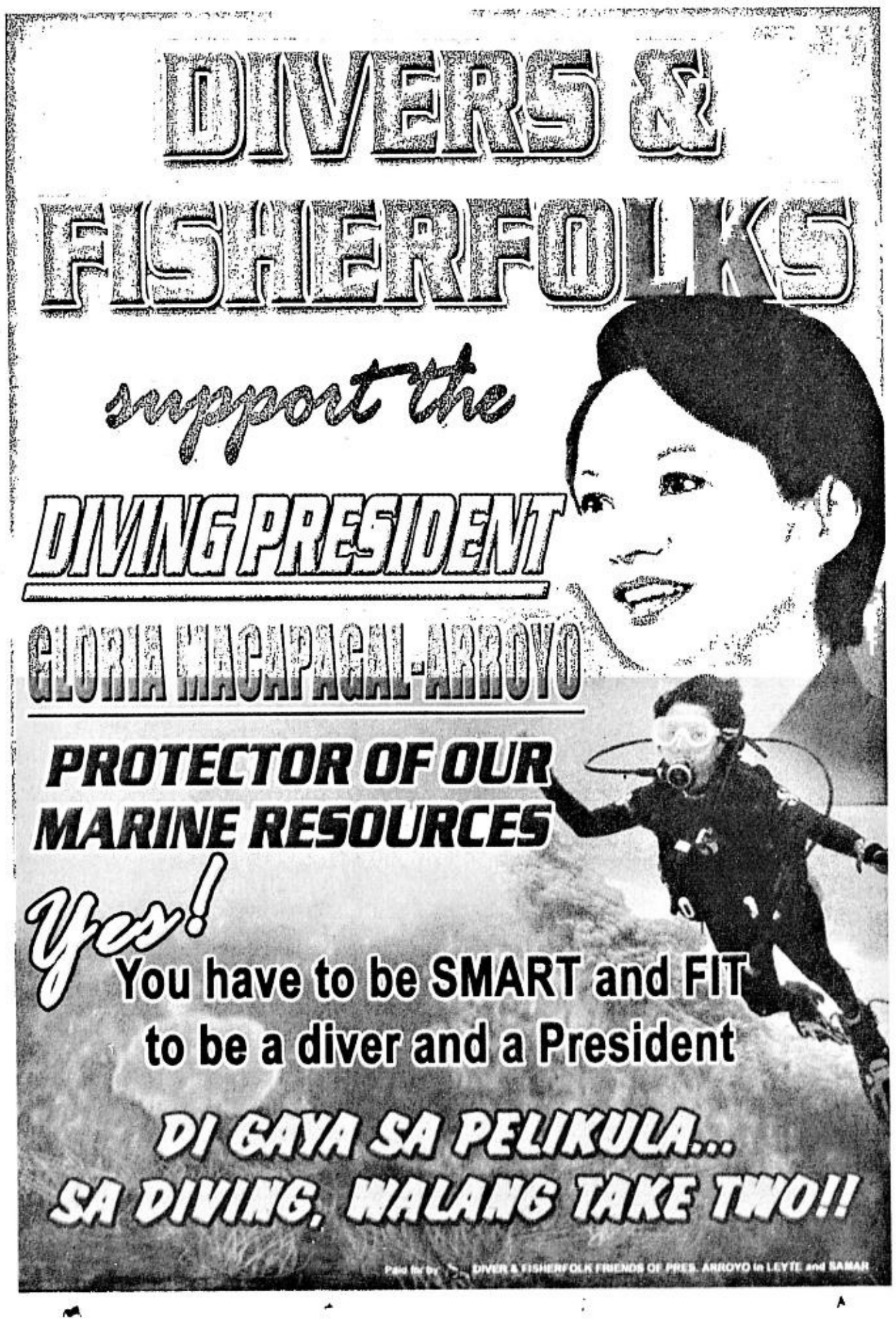
The Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress (NPC) passed an interpretation of Hong Kong's "Basic Law" giving Beijing full control over the territory's political reform, a parliament member told reporters.

Tsang Hin-chi, an NPC Standing Committee member from Hong Kong, said the ruling was for the good of the people.

"It is very mild and very clear," he said. "People should not blindly oppose it, but put the best interests of Hong Kong people first."

Tsang is the only Hong Kong delegate on the Standing Committee who had the right to vote on the interpretation.

Hong Kong's leading pro-democracy lawmaker, Martin Lee, said the ruling undermined the rule of law. *Reuters*



WORLDBRIEFS

Haiti elections set in 2005

PORT-AU-PRINCE—Haiti vowed on Monday to hold presidential elections in 2005 and visiting Secretary of State Colin Powell pledged US support to help the poorest country in the Americas start over after a bloody revolt. Interim Prime Minister Gerard Latortue told a news conference with Powell at Port-au-Prince's heavily guarded airport Haiti's next president would take the reins in February 2006—when ousted ex-President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's term was originally due to end. Powell, the first high-ranking US official to visit Haiti since Aristide went into exile on Feb. 29, rejected a call by the 15-nation Caribbean Community for a probe into Aristide's ouster. *Reuters*

Floods kill 31 in Mexico

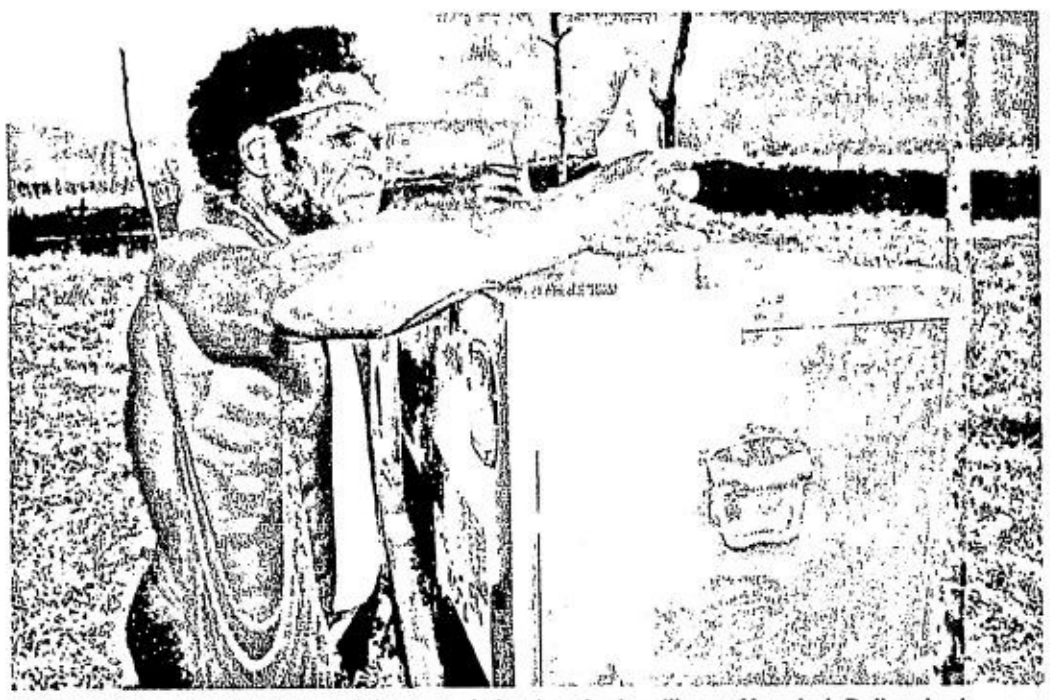
PIEDRAS NEGRAS, Mexico—Emergency crews searched for survivors early Tuesday after downpours triggered flash floods that tore through this town on the US border, killing 31 and leaving at least a dozen more missing. President Vicente Fox declared a state of emergency in Piedras Negras, a town of 200,000 in Coahuila state, 240 km southwest of San Antonio, Texas. Coahuila Gov. Enrique Martinez called the flooding some of the worst in the history of the US-Mexico border region, saying "the magnitude of destruction is enormous." Emergency crews had recovered the bodies of 31 victims, but said more than a dozen others had yet to be accounted for. About 100 homes were severely damaged or demolished completely and thousands of people were living in makeshift shelters in municipal buildings. *AP*

Strong quake hits Afghanistan

KABUL—A powerful earthquake jolted the remote Hindu Kush mountains along Afghanistan's northeast border with Pakistan early Tuesday. Reports said at least one person was dead, and probably more. "There are casualties, but we are still trying to sort out the details," the head of the Afghan Red Crescent Society, Qarabig Ezedyar, said. Police also reported hearing of deaths from the quake, which was centered in Afghanistan's Badakhshan province and caused panic even in the capital, Kabu. A woman was crushed to death when a wall collapsed in Badakhshan's Shahri Buzurg district, local police chief Abdul Musbah said. The quake, which struck at 1:54 a.m. Afghan time (2124 GMT Monday), was felt as far away as the Pakistani city of Lahore, near the border with India, and in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan. *AP*

Sharon dismisses corruption raps

JERUSALEM—Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon says he is innocent of corruption allegations against him and is confident that Israel's attorney general will not indict him for bribery. Sharon's comments, released Monday in a series of interviews, came as Attorney General Meni Mazuz considered a recommendation from the chief prosecutor, Edna Arbel, that Sharon be indicted for accepting bribes in connection with building development schemes in Greece and Israel. Mazuz is expected to make a decision on Arbel's recommendation by early June. Sharon's problems focus on allegations that Israeli businessman David Appel paid Sharon's son Gilad US$690,000 so that Sharon, then foreign minister, would use his influence to help Appel promote a tourism project in on a Greek island in 1999 *AP*



A TRIBAL man votes in Indonesia's general elections in the village of Lembah Balien, in the town of Wamena in Papua, Indonesia, Monday. Suharto's party is likely to win the most seats. AP

Megawati's party trails in Indonesian elections

JAKARTA—The Golkar Party of former dictator Suharto is leading Indonesia's parliamentary elections, with President Megawati Sukarnoputri's party trailing in second place, a private poll showed Tuesday.

A sample of votes cast at 1,416 polling stations representing all 32 Indonesian provinces showed Golkar ahead with 22.7 percent and Megawati's Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle with 18.8 percent, according to the Washington-based National Democratic Institute.

Indonesians voted Monday for a 550-seat lower house, a 128-seat upper house, and local and provincial councils. It was the second free election in Indonesia since the fall of Suharto in 1998—and was expected to set the scene for the country's first-ever direct presidential election in July.

Opinion polls days before the vote had predicted Golkar would win more seats than Megawati's party. This was thought to be a reflection of widespread discontent with Megawati's hands-off leadership style and a longing for the order and stability associated with Suharto's regime.

Full results from the polling—which spanned 17,000 islands across 4,800 km—were not expected for several days.

Early official results had showed Megawati's party leading with 18.7 percent followed by Golkar with 15.5 percent. That was based on 1.4 million votes counted, or about 1 percent of the total. But most of those were on the main island of Java—where Megawati enjoys her greatest support.

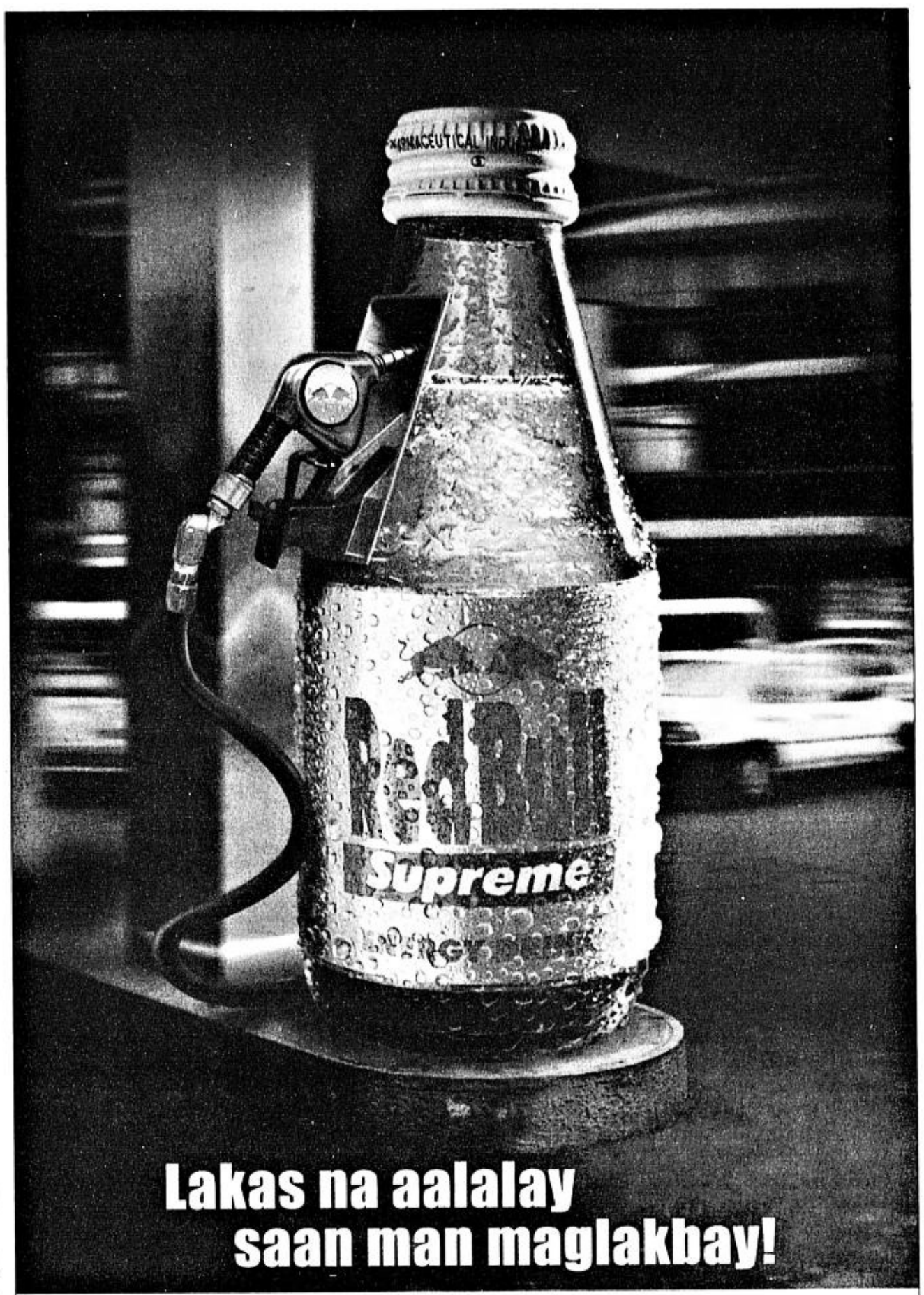
The institute—the international arm of the US Democratic Party—sampled 289,000 votes of a likely total of 124 million. However, it was considered the best indication yet of the final result because the sampling came from throughout Indonesia.

"It shows the direction of the final results nationwide," said survey organizer Paul Rowland.

Golkar's secretary general, Agung Laksono, said he could not predict victory and said the race would be close.

"I am convinced that if Golkar wins it will only be by around 1 or 2 percent," he told The Associated Press. The same, he said, applies for the president's party.

Even if Megawati's party wins the most seats, it's likely to be far less than the 34 percent of the vote the party enjoyed in the last elections in 1999. Opinion polls show Megawati—daughter of Indonesia's founding president Sukarno—already trailing her former national security minister, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, in the July presidential race. *AP*



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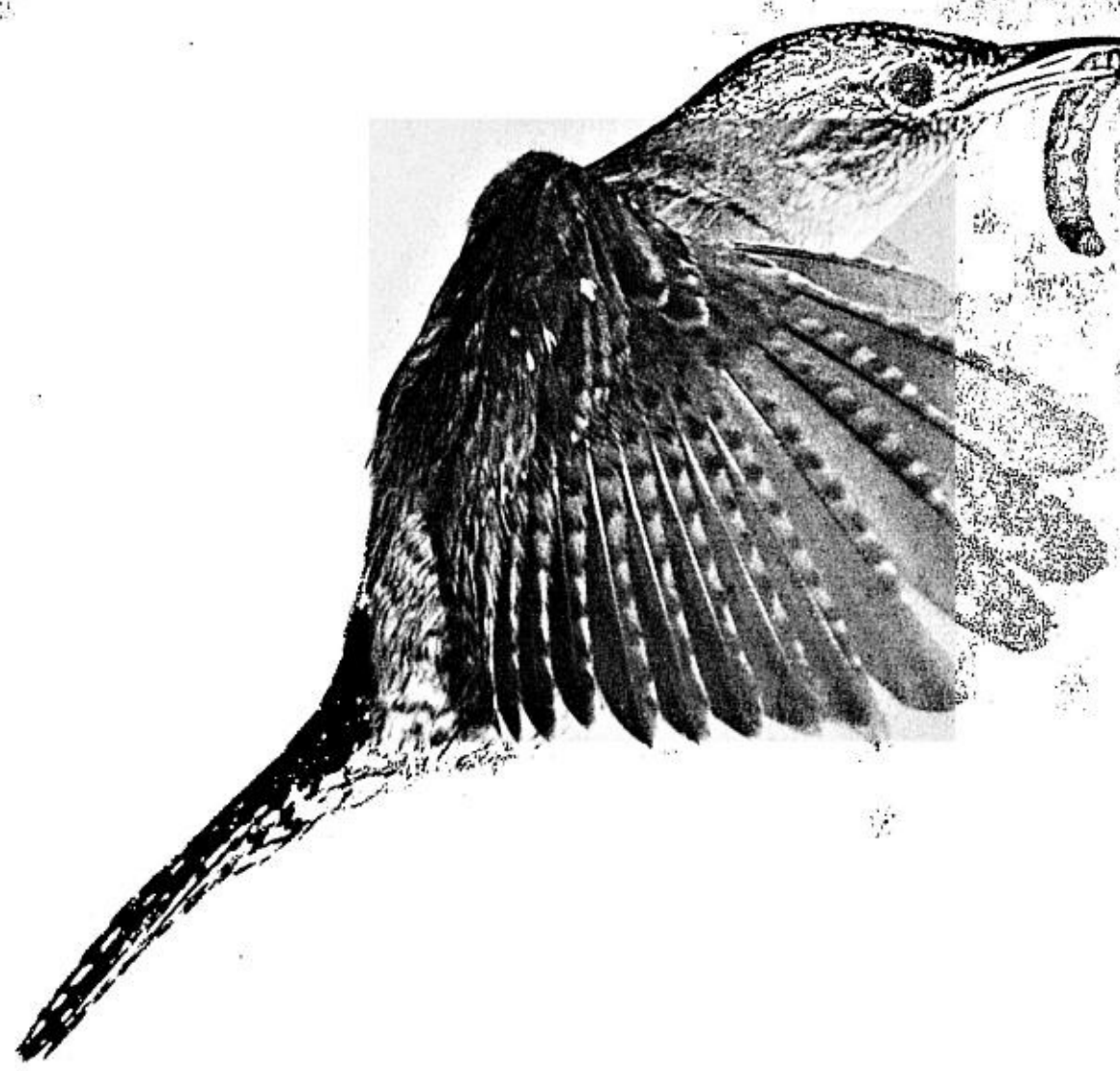

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Loren plus

OF the many political decisions she has made, Sen. Loren Legarda's bravest was surely reached late last month. Uncharacteristically, Legarda launched a no-holds-barred attack on the Lopez family, owners of the ABS-CBN broadcasting network she used to work for.

Their crime: "cooking" the Filipino people "in their own fat" through "an unforgivable betrayal of the public trust."

EDITORIALS

Legarda, who became popular when she hosted the TV news on ABS-CBN, was referring to the proposed Maynilad Water settlement. She called it a "midnight deal that stinks to high heavens," an "outright giveaway to private interests of public money."

And then using a Filipino turn of phrase made popular on ABS-CBN's own news programs, Fernando Poe Jr.'s running mate declared: "The poor Filipino taxpayer and water consumers are being cooked in their own fat just to favor the private owners of Maynilad."

She never did name the Lopezes, who own a majority of Maynilad, but her statement left no room for doubt. "This is made obvious by the fact that the new head of Maynilad is Fiorello 'Toto' Estuar, president of a construction company owned by Benpres, holding company of Maynilad," Legarda said in a press statement.

Benpres is the holding company of much of the Lopez family's many interests.

If courage means doing something regardless of the consequences, if it means burning one's bridges forever and living with the sudden isolation, then Legarda cut a true profile in political courage last month.

It doesn't matter if she lit the torch out of desperation (Sen. Noli de Castro, another news reader from ABS-CBN, looks headed for a landslide victory in the vice-presidential race).

And it doesn't matter whether she had actually studied the terms of the proposed settlement, which she claims to be grossly disadvantageous.

What matters is that she drew a line in the sand knowing full well her future in both politics and broadcasting was at stake, simply because there would be no turning back.

Her vote to open the second Jose Velarde envelope during the Estrada impeachment trial may have been difficult; her decision to bolt Lakas and leave President Macapagal-Arroyo behind painful. But in terms of consequences, her decision to dramatically sever her ties with the Lopez family ran the gravest risk.

Loren minus

BUT whatever respect Sen. Loren Legarda regained from her unequivocal stand on the Maynilad Water deal, she promptly lost last week, through her role in the Sandra Aguinaldo controversy.

After opposition coalition presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. vented his ire against Aguinaldo, a TV reporter from the GMA broadcasting network, during a campaign sortie in Tigbauan town, near Iloilo City, Legarda immediately rushed in and—instinctively, unthinkingly—asked Aguinaldo to apologize.

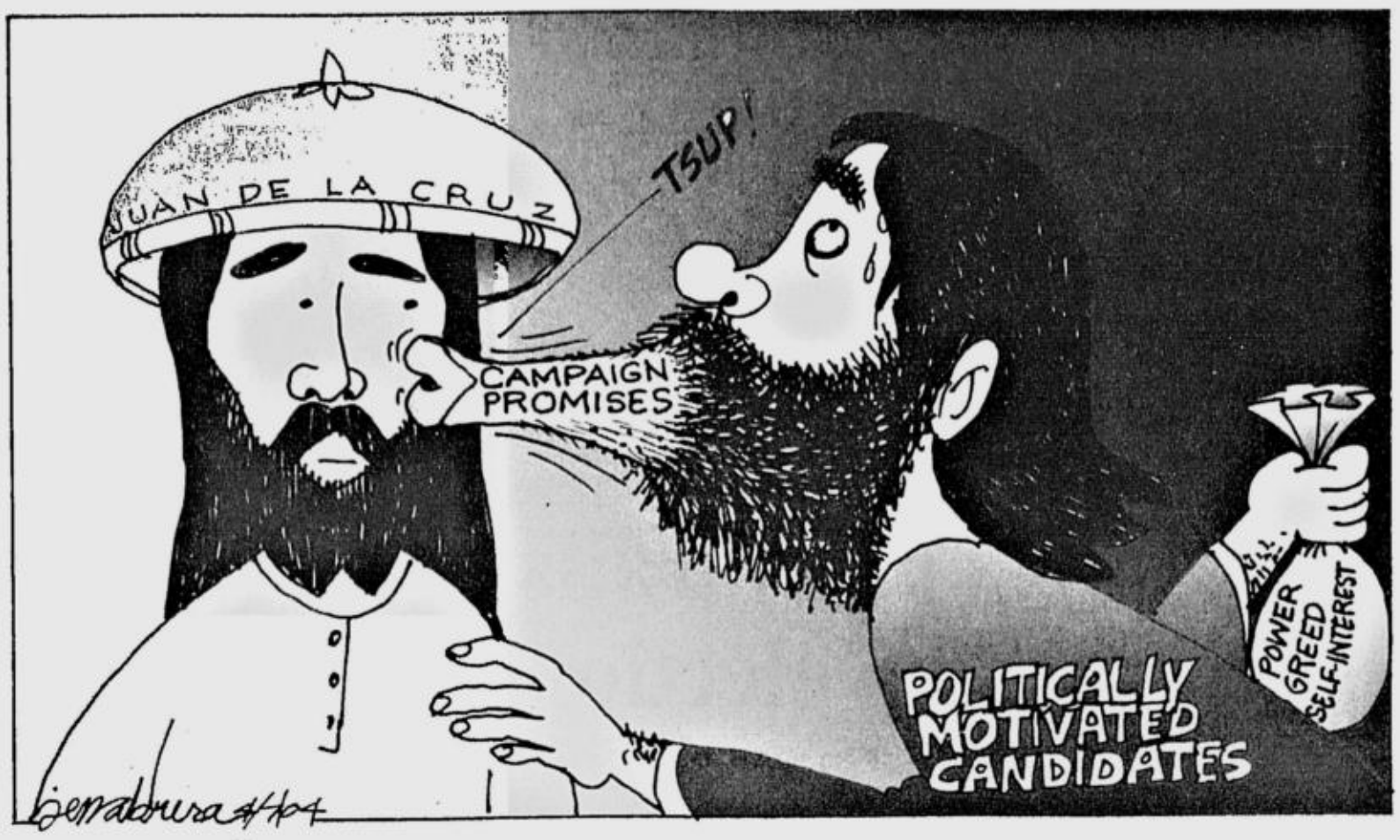
As Aguinaldo remembered it, Legarda told her: "*Magapologize ka para matapos na* (Apologize to get it over with)."

This piece of worldly wisdom came moments after Poe, bothered that Aguinaldo was doing a "stand-upper" while he was talking on stage, berated the reporter in front of the crowd. (Incidentally, after giving Aguinaldo a piece of his mind, Poe tried to resume his speech, but gave up and turned over the microphone to fellow actor Eddie Garcia. Later that night, the man who would be President returned to Manila on an "urgent" matter.)

Poe, it has become clear now, does not understand the role the free press plays in a democracy, in part because he is used to having his way with the sometimes sycophantic entertainment media.

But Legarda has no such excuse. She has spent almost her entire professional life in the broadcast industry. As a news anchor, it was her responsibility to present the news that reporters like Aguinaldo gathered and produced. She had herself done reporting and production work.

For her to instinctively ask Aguinaldo to apologize therefore calls her entire journalism background into question. It is both the responsibility and the privilege of the journalist to speak truth to power, if the occasion demands. On that stage in Tigbauan town, power clashed with the demands of truth-telling. That Legarda instinctively, unthinkingly, sided with power is revealing.



Are Christians masochists?

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

AFTER WATCHING Mel Gibsons's gory movie, "The Passion of the Christ," I was again confronted with the thought asked many times before: Are Christians masochists and sadists? That is to say, do they like to inflict pain on themselves? Do they like to watch others suffer in pain?

Judging from the way we observe Holy Week, the answer seems to be in the affirmative. Penitents flog themselves bloody while walking in long lines along country roads, gawked at by hundreds of people; others carry heavy wooden crosses on their shoulders in imitation of Christ, parading under the hot sun from town to town; still others have themselves nailed, literally, on crosses to the oohs and aahs of onlookers who include foreign tourists.

No normal person likes to inflict pain on himself. So why do they do it? To atone for their sins is the ready answer. "It's a *panata*," a vow in return for a prayer granted by God—a relative cured, a job acquired—or for a wish still to be granted, such as a win in the lotto, etc. If you don't fulfill a vow made to God, you will be punished (or you won't win in the lotto), either by eternal damnation or by any of a thousand and one forms of bad luck to befall your family.

But we also like to watch others suffer. Aside from watching the penitents and the Christ-imitators being nailed on the cross, we like to watch *senakulos*, stage shows in which actors and actresses reenact the Passion of Christ down to the crucifixion. On Good Friday, we endure hours listening to windy priests delivering sermons, with much emoting and hyperbole, on Christ's suffering. Wealthy families hold *pabasas* in which "singers" chant the life of Christ, broadcast by loudspeakers to the whole barrio day and night.

Even forms of entertainment dwell on the pain and suffering of Christ. Movie and television fare for Holy Week are reruns, shown year after year, of the different movie versions of the life of Christ—with emphasis of course on His suffering and death—the miracles seen by visionaries, the lives of other saints, etc.

Gibson's movie is just the latest of these. Its difference with the others is that Gibson did not spare the ketchup. It was a good investment because the critics were impressed by the abundance of blood, violence and cruelty. Critics usually frown on too much violence in other movies but not, it seems, when the violence is done on Jesus Christ. From the praises heaped on Gibson's movie, it seems the more graphic is the delivery of pain on Christ, the better.

And from the way people are flocking to the theaters to watch "The Passion of the Christ," it would seem that they enjoy seeing Christ suffer.

Is this a correct impression? Do Christians like to see others suffer and inflict pain on themselves? Christianity is the only religion that puts emphasis on pain and suffering. While other religions dwell on the lives, philosophy and teachings of their gods and prophets, Christianity emphasizes the pain inflicted on Christ. Every day, the sermons delivered by priests during Masses hark back to this. Religious statuary, posters and calendars show Christ hanging from the Cross, a nail of thorns on his head, blood oozing from His wounds. Everywhere we turn, we are reminded of this.

That, say the religious, is the purpose of repetition: that Christ suffered for us; He sacrificed Himself to redeem the sins of the world. We should not forget that. We tend to forget during the rest of the year, so Holy Week is the chance, once a year, to remind us—graphically.

But doesn't that make Filipinos superstitious, like when they rub their sweepstakes and lotto tickets on the images of saints in the belief that they would make them win? Like when they walk on bare knees from a church's front door to the altar (then proudly showing the wounds and welts of the knees to others later) in repentance for one's sins or in prayer for a favor? Or like when they hurt themselves as the penitents do and in the process creating a circus atmosphere around what is supposed to be a solemn occasion?

The Catholic Church of course has issued statements against the penitents flogging themselves silly or having themselves nailed on the cross. Christ did not mean for us to imitate Him so literally, the Church said. It is enough that we sincerely repent for our sins and resolve to do better from hereon. But Church leaders do this only half-heartedly, I wonder why. And priests unwittingly add to this by emphasizing in their every utterance the suffering of Christ. As if suffering is the shortcut to Heaven. And so the primitive and superstitious practices continue.

In a way, this has a beneficial effect. It enables people who suffer to bear their pain and bad luck. "It is God's will. Maybe He has a purpose for me," they rationalize. "Maybe it is punishment for sins I may have committed. God moves in mysterious ways."

But we may be missing the point of Holy Week. Holy Week is not just about the torture and death of Christ. It is mainly about His Resurrection, that He died but came to life again, that He is still alive today 2,000 years after His death on the Cross. So the emphasis of Holy Week should not be on Good Friday, when He died, but Easter Sunday, when he came to life again and ascended to Heaven.

* * *

KAPIHAN NOTES: Kapihan sa Manila (Hotel) will resume this Monday, after Sunday. Guest will be Bro. Eddie Villanueva, presidential candidate of the Bangon Pilipinas Party.

Glimpses of power

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

MY favorite glimpses into the nature of power are these:

The first one comes from a story told to me by an uncle-in-law. They were sons of supporters of the late Carlos P. Garcia, they said, and they used to go to his house every Christmas time to wish him well. Garcia was president then. They went there as usual in 1961, but by then he was no longer president. A month before he had lost the elections to Diosdado Macapagal

They went to Bohol Avenue that Christmas and found his home bathed in darkness, a single fluorescent lamp throwing a dull light in the kitchen. Having nothing better to do, they broke into a half-drunk Christmas carol, laughing gleefully. They were about to leave when a maid emerged from out of the house and bade them to come in. They were surprised and said, no, they would just come back when the lord of the manor was in. They were even more surprised when the maid said he was in.

The maid led them inside the house and they waited in the living room. The state of the house struck a contrast with that of the last four years when it burst with light and well-wishers, a din of music and conversation hovering in the air. Now, only the whisper of distant carolers and the hum of the air-conditioner penetrated the room. Presently, Garcia and his wife came down, and greeted them. He was the picture of graciousness, thanking them and inviting them to a simple repast.

The repast didn't just prove simple, it proved mournful. The conversation rose and fell, and despite being fortified with drink, they could not bring themselves to any level of enthusiasm. The dark shadows, literal and figurative, kept pulling them down. They said their goodbyes shortly afterward, Garcia thanking them again. When they were out of the house, they felt as though they had just left the grave.

I've heard other stories like this. Cory told me as well how no one would sit beside her shortly after martial law when she was fighting to have Ninoy released. She and her maid would sit on one table on one side of a hall while everybody else—many of them former frequent guests of their house—would stay away. And someone told me as well how he saw Jose de Venecia eating alone at a restaurant in Forbes shortly after the 1998 elections. He was never without company before.

But I've always found the first story above more mournful than the others. Such is power lost.

My second glimpse into the nature of power comes from Tolkien, who wrote the books that went on to become screen legends. What has always fascinated me about the "Lord of the Rings" is its concept of power. The Great Ring may not be worn by anyone lest he be corrupted by it, lest all that he is be conscripted only to craving it. That is why the task of destroying it falls on a Hobbit, because Hobbits are a race least given to ambition. The task may not be entrusted to the wisest and bravest of the Fellows of the Ring: Not to Gandalf, not to Aragorn, because even they would not be impervious to its effects. Even they will be transformed from being wise and brave to being covetous and power-mad. It may be entrusted only to Frodo, the Hobbit. As it is, even the cheerful, level-headed, and underachieving Frodo would not be able to part with the Ring in the end, and has to be impelled into its destruction by a former fellow Hobbit turned underworld creature called Gollum. (That is clearer in the book.)

You cannot have a sharper insight into power. It's the story of the ogre that never dies retold, and in a most poetic way. The ogre story, for those who haven't yet heard of it, tells of a brave and dashing prince who sets out to do the impossible which is to kill an invincible ogre. None that has dared to enter the ogre's castle has come out of it. The prince goes to the castle and finds that the task is not daunting at all. He kills the ogre easily enough. And then turns into the ogre himself.

Such is the effect of power.

My third glimpse into the nature of power comes from someone whose death we mark today. Whether you are a Muslim who believes that Jesus Christ was just one of the great prophets, among whom Mohammad was the greatest, or whether you are a Christian who believes he was truly the son of God, you cannot but stand in awe before what he did. A carpenter's son, he rose to fame by the depth of wisdom of his teachings, often told in parables, (if you are a Christian, and by the miracles he performed as well), challenging conventional religious wisdom as franchised by the Pharisees. Despite being invited by political groups to join them, like the one represented by Simon Zealotes, he refused, preferring to believe in something utterly bizarre, which is to turn the other cheek when one is slapped in the face.

He lived up to—and died—for that conviction. Like many people the world has known, he rose through his impoverished origins to gain fame and adulation. Unlike most everyone the world has known, he renounced them at the price of a most painful death, as Mel Gibson chronicles in his now miraculously successful movie on it. Despite the efforts of Pontius Pilate and other Roman officials to get him to turn his back on his teachings, with the offer to spare his life, he refused, and was nailed to the cross along with a couple of petty thieves. If you are a Christian you believe that he rose from the dead to prove to his disciples the truth of the resurrection. If you are not, you at least know that his teachings have gone past the grave to last more than a couple of thousand years. If you are a Christian, you believe those teachings will last for all eternity. If you are not, you know at least they will be around for a lot longer than you will be.

Such is true power.

Poe's faltering campaign

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE SOCIAL Weather Stations' latest survey, March 21-29, shows that barely four weeks before the election, Fernando Poe Jr. and President Macapagal-Arroyo are locked in a tie, with Poe at 32 percent, and the President 31.4 percent. For the past three surveys, they have been running neck and neck. Since January, the President has been making an astonishing uphill struggle, stopping Poe from pulling ahead. On the other hand, Poe has lost momentum, with his early lead narrowing since February, allowing the President to catch up slowly. The two are showing different curves—the President's is on the rise and Poe's on the decline; the gap between the two has in fact closed and settled down to a stalemate.

This stand-off cannot remain static until May 10 because events are never static. They are dynamic and sometimes volatile. This stand-off begs to be broken. The balance could easily swing either way if a dramatic or shocking event breaks out.

That the Poe campaign is not running smoothly and gaining momentum, as earlier expected, is underlined by the surveys of the past two months. There's another non-statistical and non-scientific indicator of a campaign that is slowing down—money. By this time, the Poe campaign should be fueled by a fat war chest. It is not. By his own admission, Chinese money is not flowing into his side. Only last week, the opposition shifted its forays for campaign funds to Chinatown, the traditional cash cow for election financing. In one of Poe's meetings in Chinatown, he admitted that he has yet to see an avalanche of Chinese money flowing into his direction.

At the same stage in the 1998 elections, the campaign of Joseph Estrada was swimming in cash. Estrada was galloping ahead in the opinion poll, and his clear lead was the reason why Chinese money was flowing into his campaign coffers. I say Chinese money because Estrada was not the darling of the Makati businessmen, who were then already having strong misgivings about his competence to manage the economy. Why Chinese money flowed to Estrada rather than to his opponents was due to one important factor—Estrada's survey ratings indicated he was running strongly in the race and there was no doubt about his winning the election by a large margin. This is not the case with the Poe campaign. The poll surveys, showing a stalemate, lead campaign contributors—mainly from Chinatown—to hedge their bets.

The non-Chinese money sources are even more tight in holding on to their purse, mainly because they are uncertain on whether Poe will win and more uncertain on how he would manage the economy. Poe has been unclear about his economic policy and program, especially on how to curb the mounting fiscal deficit. There is in fact an undercurrent of belief in the business community that the President could win. Indeed, one key sector of the banking community, Citibank, has expressed more confidence in a Macapagal presidency than in a Poe presidency.

Businessmen vote with their pockets and at no stage of the campaign are funds more important than now because money is the oil needed to mobilize voters to the polling stations. In a very tight race, a machinery for voter mobilization that covers the entire country would tilt the balance. It would be extremely naïve to think that popularity alone will drive voters in droves to the polling stations. The assumption of popularity, even stemming from exposure in movies, is invalid. The poll surveys undermine that assumption. Hence, it is indulging in illusion to assume that voters will go to the polling stations without transport. The fact is the administration party, Lakas, has a distinct advantage in infrastructure to mobilize voters, and I am not talking of vote buying. Logistics includes a lot of other things than handing out cash. The trip to the polls for voters, especially the poor, has to be facilitated. Campaign propaganda and printed material cost a lot of money. In the US election, President George W. Bush and Sen. John Kerry are being hit by the costs of information material. Advertising eats up most of their campaign budgets. Both are locked in fund-raising running to hundreds of millions in dollars spent on advertising.

I have never seen a more inept presidential campaign than the one now being run by the opposition. The opposition campaign is faltering because it is based on a number of false assumptions. At the beginning, the opposition believed Poe was invincible, mainly because of his popularity derived from movie stardom. The popularity proved to be a bubble as the campaign moved on, punctured by the poll surveys that showed the Macapagal catch-up.

The next assumption, based on the first, was equally dubious. On the unfounded belief in the invincibility of Poe, the opposition assumed money will flow to the opposition war chest.

The third assumption is that with more exposure for Poe, charisma will work to cover for his deficiencies. As it has turned out, the longer and the more Poe goes to the hustings, the more his deficiencies are exposed. The more he avoids debates, the more he talks in one-liners that are no more than nonsense; the more the bubble shrinks and the more he disappoints those who have been carried away by claims of his invincibility. Poe has already exposed his vulnerabilities—including his thuggery. He is lucky the campaign period is a short one.

The youth's potential

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

WHILE in Bacolod last week, I met with the local organizers of the "Y2004 SK National Congress" that was set to open the next day at the Bacolod Convention Plaza with 1,500 SK leaders from around the country expected to attend. The Sangguniang Kabataan leaders were expecting President Macapagal-Arroyo for the keynote address.

Among the highlights of this year's conference, said Marx Louie "Exel" de la Rosa, SK Federation president of Bacolod City, were the study tours and field visits to various SK projects around Negros Occidental, for the participants to observe and perhaps replicate "best practices" in youth empowerment and social involvement in their own locales.

Both Exel and Lorenzo Suatengco, provincial SK Federation head and assistant treasurer of the National Federation, attested to the potential of the SK system to "mainstream" young people and youth concerns in line with the affairs of government. Certainly a great resource is the share of local revenues allotted to the SK, for use mostly in sports development, environmental concerns and waste management, cultural development and adolescent reproductive health.

There have been observations, though, that because of sheer inexperience and the patronage of older politicians, SK representatives often function as no more than "rubber stamp" legislators, following the lead of the local executive or the ruling party in the deliberations of the local councils. Instead of infusing local politics with the idealism and youth energy, SK representatives end up being co-opted, if not corrupted outright, learning the worst lessons of politics at such an early age.

It's not as if the SK leaders are unaware of such perceptions, said Exel. Which is why the National Federation has organized an ongoing search for outstanding SK projects, the "Oscars" of the SK. It's hoped that the winning projects would serve as models of significant and meaningful youth contribution to national development.

* * *

ALSO while in Bacolod, mainly to serve as resource person on the "Writeshop for Visayan Media" on gender, sexuality and reproductive health and rights, I had the chance to meet with the local leaders of Abanse! Pinay as well as with some Bacolod visual artists who took part in the Women's Month exhibit of women's art sponsored by Dawn Foundation.

The meeting was held at the McDonald's outlet along Bacolod's main street. Take the choice of location as indication of the state of Abanse! Pinay's finances, though I don't think the limited campaign budget has affected in the least the fighting spirit of the members and supporters. At least not judging from the atmosphere during that breakfast meeting!

Mary Ann Duran Dino, who heads the provincial chapter of Abanse! Pinay, says she is optimistic that the party-list group will duplicate its performance in the 1998 elections, where it emerged as the No. 1 party list in Bacolod and No. 2 in Negros Occidental.

The political situation in Bacolod is quite interesting. Councilor and leading women's rights proponent Celia Flor, who is national vice president of Abanse! Pinay, has decided to defy political pundits and has flung herself headlong into the mayoral race. She is facing formidable odds, as she is running against not just the incumbent but also a former mayor. But as Celia sees it, with the present city administration's record smeared by so many cases and allegations of irregularities, the time may have come to tap into popular discontent. "Bacolod voters are known to support even little-known candidates once they become really disillusioned with the present crop of politicians," says Celia. As her friend, I'm hoping Celia's sensing of the popular mood in Bacolod proves accurate. Bacolod will certainly emerge the winner with Celia, given her reputation and dedication, at its helm.

* * *

ANOTHER friend running for local office in Negros Occidental is June Pavillar Castro, who is gunning for councilor in Silay City, as part of the ticket of incumbent Mayor Carlo Gamban.

Jay Jalandoni, who is running for vice mayor and whom I met at the McDo breakfast, noted wryly that "if you put all our bio-data together, it would still not compare favorably with June's accomplishments."

But what makes June, another Abanse! Pinay stalwart, truly admirable is that she has racked up her impressive lineup of accomplishments in local governance, civic affairs and NGO involvements while raising three children.

My prayers, then, for June, her husband David and their children, and for the people of Silay that they take advantage of June's wealth of knowledge and experience for the good of their lovely city.

* * *

FOR young people in search of meaningful but enjoyable ways to spend their summer vacation, the first Lakbay Aral Kalikasan (Lakbay Kal) Summer Environmental Youth Camps offer an intriguing alternative.

The youth camps, says Jerome Montemayor of FPEEE (Fostering People's Education, Empowerment and Enterprise), will be "perfect venues to encourage future leaders to practice social responsibility and environmental management." Participants can choose among three campsites: Kalahan Mountain Sanctuaries in Sta. Fe, Nueva Vizcaya; Biak na Bato National Park in Bulacan; and Bohol. Experienced environmentalists will help campers increase their awareness and appreciation of the environment and environmental issues while hiking, caving, swimming, camping, forest trekking and bird watching.

Interested parties may contact FPEEE at Tel. Nos. 927-2186, 927-9403 and 926-9629, or by e-mail at lakbayka@yahoo.com and fpeee_ph@yahoo.com.

Unmoved by 'Passion'

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

WHEN people seek my opinion on the Mel Gibson film, "The Passion of the Christ," my first impulse is to lie and say I haven't had the chance to see it yet. But this being the Holy Week, I must be truthful and admit I wasn't moved at all. Maybe it was the media hype or the endorsement of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines that turned me off. Perhaps it was my historical and monastic training that should be blamed for my lack of sympathy. I don't know why I reacted the way I did. Thus, my Holy Week reflection means looking inward to understand and remedy my lack of piety and devotion. Maybe I should have watched the film alone and not be ashamed to shed tears. We were warned beforehand that audiences the world over cried buckets midway through the film, so my sister came prepared with a box of Kleenex. Unfortunately the only thing I reached for was the popcorn. Worse, my heathen brother-in-law enjoyed a tender juicy hotdog despite the whipping scene.

What really made me see the film was the opinion of the eminent Jesuit theologian Catalino Arevalo who said the film was worth two retreats. I took him at his word and was rewarded with pure revulsion. The film is a sadomasochist's dream and deserves an R-18 rating for the sheer violence it displayed, but the sight of many minors in the audience said a lot about contemporary Philippine society—parents will shield children from sex and nudity but allow them to view violence. One should ask which, in the long run, has a more negative impact on human development.

At least the film led me to one resolution: I will listen to Father Arevalo for theology, I will heed the CBCP for pastoral concerns, but will never listen to them for movie reviews. Nobody seems to be bothered by the glaring historical inaccuracies in the film. For example: Jesus, the carpenter from Galilee, speaking to Pilate in Latin, his being made to carry the whole cross rather than just the crossbar to the site of execution, the scourging at the pillar using those hideous whips instead of the plain reed, that he was nailed on the palms rather than the wrist, that his mother was played by an actress who looked barely 40 years old suggesting that she never grew old or gave birth to Christ when she was 12.

I never expected my undergraduate theology at the Ateneo would come in handy one day. Since the film is not a documentary on National Geographic or the Discovery channel, we should gloss over historical accuracy and focus on the emotional and spiritual effects on viewers.

Obviously Gibson made a film for the converted and the believing. It is challenging to direct a movie when viewers know the ending. Watching the film was easy for Filipinos who are raised on the annual *Sinakulo* and the *Pasyon* during Lent. We know the story, we know the iconography, we actually wait for particular scenes and particular lines. In a sense, Gibson's film plays to a Filipino audience. It is the extended play version of the Stations of the Cross, those static pictures we see hanging on the sides of churches. This explains why I could overhear people in the audience counting the number of times Christ falls on the way to Calvary (He should fall thrice), counting the number of times Peter denies Christ before the cock crows (he should do so thrice), waiting to see the towel used to wipe the bloody face of Christ by a kind woman (to the Filipino there should be three images on the towel, three faces that resemble criminal mugshots, one frontal view and two side views). Even the blood was not new for those used to flagellants and real crucifixions in Pampanga, the only difference being the wide screen, close-ups, the sound effects and the irritating scene-stealing devil that keeps gliding about.

This evening we will make the annual trek to my father's hometown in waterlogged Minalin, Pampanga to join the procession. My city-bred nieces will again be given a lesson in iconography as all the *carrozas* pass by. They will soon be able to tell Mary the Mother of Jesus from Mary Magdalene and Veronica. They will be able to tell St. John from St. Peter. They will marvel at the lights, and the gold embroidery on those heavy velvet costumes. One can only wonder how they make sense of all of these folk practices and color the way in which they live and understand their faith. The images of the saints are revered by the elder generation, but to us who played hide and seek in the room where they were stored outside of Holy Week, they are but mannequins. One of my cousins was even curious enough to have us go under the vestments if only to check if these were anatomically correct. Maybe my childhood and my education have a lot to do with my reaction to Gibson's "Passion of the Christ" but then if the film has made me sit back and look into myself, made me stop to separate truth from myth, maybe Father Arevalo was right that the film is so powerful that it is indeed worth two retreats. Every person will react to the film in his or her own way and whether you like the film or not, it will at least move you to reflection. Surely the same cannot be expected of "Scooby Doo 2," which vainly competed with "The Passion."

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Pain, passion and faith

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

THE CATHOLIC Bishops' Conference of the Philippines has endorsed Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ" but has warned viewers about the violence in the film.

I would worry too. The film is full of scenes so bloody and brutal that it received an R (restricted) rating in the States.

But I'm hoping Gibson's film can be used to stimulate more discussion about the different Christian views about redemption. One view, represented in Gibson's film, is that it is mainly Jesus' suffering that redeemed humanity. Catholics know this very well, the way we are taught, from an early age, the sorrowful mysteries in the rosary and the many Lenten observances and rituals such as the Stations of the Cross.

There is also a strong Catholic mystical tradition emphasizing pain, an example of which is the phenomenon of the stigmata, wounds appearing on the body corresponding to those of the crucifixion. Padre Pio is a well-known example of a stigmatist. There was also Anne Catherine Emmenrich (1774-1824), a German Augustinian nun, who not only had the stigmata but also claimed she had visions of Christ's passion, which she eventually compiled into a book, "The Dolorous Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ," which Gibson acknowledges as having inspired his film.

Not all Christian churches share this focus on Christ's passion. Kenneth Woodward, writing in the Feb. 25 issue of the New York Times, notes that American Christianity has in fact tended to move away from this focus on Jesus' suffering: "Most Americans worship in churches where the bloodied body of Jesus is absent from sanctuary crosses or else styled in ways so abstract that there is no hint of suffering."

Woodward explains that all this is a legacy of the Reformation in the 16th century when radical Protestants reacted against what they saw as the idolatry of Catholics. Statues of saints were removed from churches, human figures from stained-glass windows, and, most importantly, Christ's body from the cross.

Given his assessment of American Christianity, Woodward welcomes Gibson's film despite what he calls "muscular excesses" in the violence. I have no quarrel with the reminders to commemorate Jesus' passion, but I worry that Gibson's film represents an almost morbid fixation on the violence of that passion, to the extent that we lose sight of the other tenets of the Christian faith, in particular the view that Jesus saved humanity by becoming human.

This incarnational view looks at Jesus' entire life, from his conception to his resurrection, as redemptive. This is why I was touched more by scenes in Gibson's film offering glimpses into Jesus' humanity, into his childhood, his trade as a carpenter, his ministry.

This view of Jesus' incarnation does not mean glossing over his suffering, but this does not have to be always in the form of bloodied bodies; in fact, one of the most moving scenes in Gibson's film was Jesus' agony in the garden, his fears and doubts over what was to come again reflecting his humanity.

Tom Beaudoin, a theology professor at Boston College writing in the March 19 issue of the National Catholic Reporter, also points out that Gibson's film has one important failure—it does not show how Jesus chose to suffer the fate of many other Jews who were then under the Romans.

Historians point out that crucifixions were very common in Jesus' time. In the first century after Christ, Romans crucified as many as 500 Jews a day to try to put down a revolt, and crosses dotted the landscape around Jerusalem. In essence then, Jesus chose to suffer as a "political prisoner" and a Jew, executed for allegedly subverting the Roman Empire.

Gibson's film distorts the facts by obscuring Jesus' Jewish identity and depicting him mainly as a victim of the Jews. No wonder, there were fears among Jews that this would reinforce anti-Semitism.

Anti-Semitism runs counter to Christianity's own messages about love and forgiveness, which do appear in Gibson's film during Jesus' most tormented and agonizing moments. But Jesus' appeals are easily lost for many reasons. First, the dialogue is all in Aramaic and Latin, with English subtitles that are unlikely to be followed by many of our local audiences, especially with the overwhelming visual images of violence.

Second, amid Jesus' own admonitions about forgiveness, we see scenes of divine wrath: a crow sent to peck the eyes of the "bad thief" who had mocked Jesus and the earthquake after the crucifixion threatening to destroy a Jewish temple.

I would be curious to see how the film will affect our own very powerful concepts of pain and suffering, some from the pre-colonial period and some from Spanish Catholicism. We see pain as a *subok*, as a trial, and sometimes as punishment for sins. Bearing the pain is glorified as a virtue.

We also look at pain as a kind of moral currency to be used for negotiating with God or the saints. People take a vow (*panata*) to inflict pain on themselves, the vow made during the crisis itself—often the illness of a close relative—to be fulfilled after the favor is granted, or even before, as if to make a stronger case for the appeal. I can never forget a news item, many years ago, of an Amerasian born of an American soldier and a Filipina mother, who had himself crucified each year in Pampanga, hoping that eventually God would help him find his father.

Paradoxically, Gibson's film could be counter-productive in the way its violence numbs people. There's a strong possibility this could happen with Filipinos. Precisely because we so emphasize pain and suffering, we have the flagellation and crucifixions during Holy Week, with the blood splashed across the front pages of our newspapers and on television newscasts. When you've seen the real thing, Gibson's footage of blood and maimed bodies come through as special effects, overdone and contrived.

I'm going to end by referring to a letter written by Donald W. Shriver, president emeritus of the Union Theological Seminary, to the New York Times, in reaction to Woodward's article. Shriver says that Woodward failed to mention another more important reason why Protestant crosses do not carry Jesus' body, and this is a "faith in resurrection, which turns the cross from an instrument of torture into a sign of victory over sin and death. Without that faith, early Christianity could hardly have survived the death of Jesus."

We need to think more about how one's faith might endure and grow, with or without Gibson's film, with or without Jesus' body on our crosses.

* * *

Comments to miguel@pinoykasi.net

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A case of political opportunism

EVEN to non-lawyers and ordinary people, the Maynilad bailout deal is clearly a product of illegal and immoral financial compromise at the expense of the Filipino people.

Why should the national government utilize taxpayers' funds to save a private corporation? The government can and should take over Maynilad, but not pay off its debts, much less allow Maynilad and its owners to escape its financial responsibilities and debts.

The MWSS essentially allowed Maynilad to renege on its commitment to pay concession fees since 1998. It also allowed Maynilad to continue collecting the accelerated extraordinary price adjustment (AEPA) when collections should have ended in December 2002. These irregularities could not have transpired without the knowledge and approval of President Macapagal-Arroyo who has always cultivated the support of the Lopezes.

The Maynilad bailout is also a vicious attack against consumers, an immoral and anti-consumer agreement. The Lopez group stands to benefit greatly from this bailout, with Ms Macapagal also catching massive windfalls for her campaign for a second term. Through this all, it is the consumers and the Filipino people who will suffer the backlash, as water rates will surge even as services remain deplorable.

It's an outrage most unjust that ordinary households, most of them urban poor and lower middle class, are forced to meet monthly water payments promptly or have their water supply cut off. Consumers who are a day late in payment are slapped with disconnection notices. Maynilad, on the other hand, has been exposed as a renegade and irresponsible concessionaire, failing to pay its dues since 1998—yet here is the government coming to its rescue and offering to absorb and pay off all its debts! Where is the justice in that?

For the sake of argument, let it be stated that the idea of the government taking over the management and ownership of Maynilad is not at all odious; but the government should not be made to absorb Maynilad's debts. Also, instead of taking over Maynilad, rehabilitating its facilities and infrastructure for eventual sale to foreign corporations, the government should prepare for Maynilad's full nationalization.

The Maynilad bailout is a glaring proof of the failure of privatization. Water rates have not gone down since the privatization policy was implemented, and in fact, steadily went up and doubled since 1998. As for the availability of safe and potable water, many large communities within Maynilad's service coverage continue to suffer from the lack of it. With the bailout cum rehabilitation, water rates are poised to increase by P5 beginning June 2004.

This infamous contract should be junked. It is a betrayal of the interest of consumers and the Filipino people. It sacrifices public interest on the altar of business greed and political opportunism.

—CARMEN V. DEUNIDA,
vice president,
Anakpawis National Political Party,
138-C Scout Fuentebella,
Kamuning, Quezon City

IMF worries not election-related

THIS is in reference to an article titled "Risks of policy reversals worry IMF" last March 1.

We would like to make clear that the International Monetary Fund's main concerns when it has discussions with all its member countries are the macroeconomic policy challenges and requirements facing the country. These challenges and requirements are considerable in the Philippines (for a discussion see http://www.imf.org/external/np/sec/pn/2003/pn03101.htm), and will remain to be addressed, regardless of the results of the upcoming elections. As such, our policy advice is not related to the outcome of the elections.

In this context, it is regrettable that your article gave the incorrect impression that the IMF endorses particular candidates for political elections. We look forward to carrying our policy dialogue forward with the Philippine authorities, whoever wins the elections, and hope that you will be able to publish this letter.

—VIKRAM HAKSAR,
representative,
International Monetary Fund,
c/o Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas,
R/407 Five-Storey Building,
Mabini Street, Manila

Ghost calls

MAY I admonish cellular phone users to recheck and verify their statements of accounts prior to paying them. In my case, I have been monitoring my billing statements since November 2003 and it appears that I have been billed for calls supposedly made at close to midnight or early morning. Fact is, I do not use my cell phone at such ungodly hours.

I have called the attention of the phone company but it seems my complaints have been unheeded. The company representative just perfunctorily explains that my phone is a "GSM" phone and therefore could not be cloned. How then could they explain those unauthorized calls being reflected in my account?

It is my hope that cell phone users will be more cautious with their statements of accounts.

—CRESENCIO V. ASPIRAS JR.,
Unit 2408, Prestige Tower,
Emerald Avenue,
Ortigas Center, Pasig City

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

Promoting nationalism

AS a member of today's youth, I can't help but rue over our waning sense of nationalism. With "westernization" having permeated our culture and way of thinking, we would rather enjoy our time than care about the sad state of affairs of our nation.

I am fortunate to have gone to the Lights and Sound Show of WOW Philippines in Intramuros a few weeks ago. The show relives Philippine history using wax figures that seem to leap out of our history books. With the use of modern light and sound technology, it effectively puts the message across to viewers like me. As I walked through the different chambers, I felt as if I was being transported back to the days of our ancestors and to the Spanish era.

We were taught in school about our roots and rich patrimony but it wasn't until then that I felt and realized the true meaning of love for country as exemplified by the lives of Jose Rizal, Lapu-Lapu, Melchora Aquino, Gabriela Silang and Fathers Gomez, Burgos and Zamora. They should be the role models for the Filipino youth because of their martyrdom and the long lost values they stood for, i.e. thirst for knowledge, service to fellowmen, bravery and faith in God. I could imagine the comforts they had to give up, the sacrifices, pains and scorn they had to endure but ably transcended so that future generations can live a life of freedom, justice and progress. The show ended with a simple and clear message—that we, the youth, are the hope of this country and it is incumbent on each and everyone of us to prove that they did not die in vain.

I strongly encourage my fellow youth to visit the Lights and Sound Show so that they can witness for themselves the greatness of the Filipino and share in our pride of country.

—FRANCESCA MARIA NICOLA DE GUZMAN DEUS,
University of Asia and the Pacific,
Pearl Drive, Pasig City

Spiritual politics

A PANEL discussion on "Dong Puno Live" about whether artists should campaign for politicians triggered a lively discussion on the merits of each candidate for whom the invited guest-artists were rooting for.

Pop diva Kuh Ledesma was quite clear and convincing about her advocacy for presidential candidate Bro. Eddie Villanueva. She said, "It is about time that the church and state should unite." This worried me seriously.

I am sure Ledesma meant well in what she sincerely expressed from her heart. But I must say that she must have been unaware of the dire implications of what she was talking about when she advocated for the unity of the church and the state.

Perhaps, she meant to say that it is about time for politics to be imbued with spiritual values. Here, I venture to add in full agreement that every aspect of social life, be it economics, politics or culture, must be practiced on the basis of spiritual values. Indeed, the absence of spiritual inspiration in each of these facets of social life is the crux of our social problems.

But unity of church and state is something else. In fact, if it is true, as Ledesma intimated, that this is what Brother Eddie intends to do if he wins, then, every Christian, every true Muslim, every true Buddhist, Taoist or Bahai, or members of any other religious denomination, must oppose such plan because that would be the end of our fragile democracy.

Just think of this: If there will be unity between church and state, we can just ask the simple question: Which church will be united with the state? Will it be Brother Eddie's Jesus is Lord Movement? The Roman Catholic Church? The Iglesia ni Cristo? The Islamic fundamentalists? The Islamic moderates? Buddhism? Taoism? The Unification Church of the Moonies? The Church of Latter Day Saints? Other Protestant churches? The list is endless and the conflict will be unimaginable.

What we really need is spiritual politics. For it is truly our urgent need, the radical solution to our social maladies. In the words of Corrine McLaughlin and Gordon Davidson, co-authors of a book titled, "In Spiritual Politics," we address the split in the social change movement between political activists and those who are spiritually minded. It is an approach that turns inward for understanding and inspiration from the spiritual realms, and then brings this inspiration into the world to create new, more effective forms and institutions.

Is it possible? Yes, it is. After all, the essential values of all genuine religions are similar. And these spiritual values are the bases of our true unity; not our institutional churches. Let our economic, political and cultural practices be therefore imbued by the spiritual values common to all churches, even as each church remains independent from the state. This is the path we must now urgently tread upon.

—BONIFACIO AMADO M. QUIROG JR.,
member,
United Religions Initiative,
boniquirog@yahoo.com

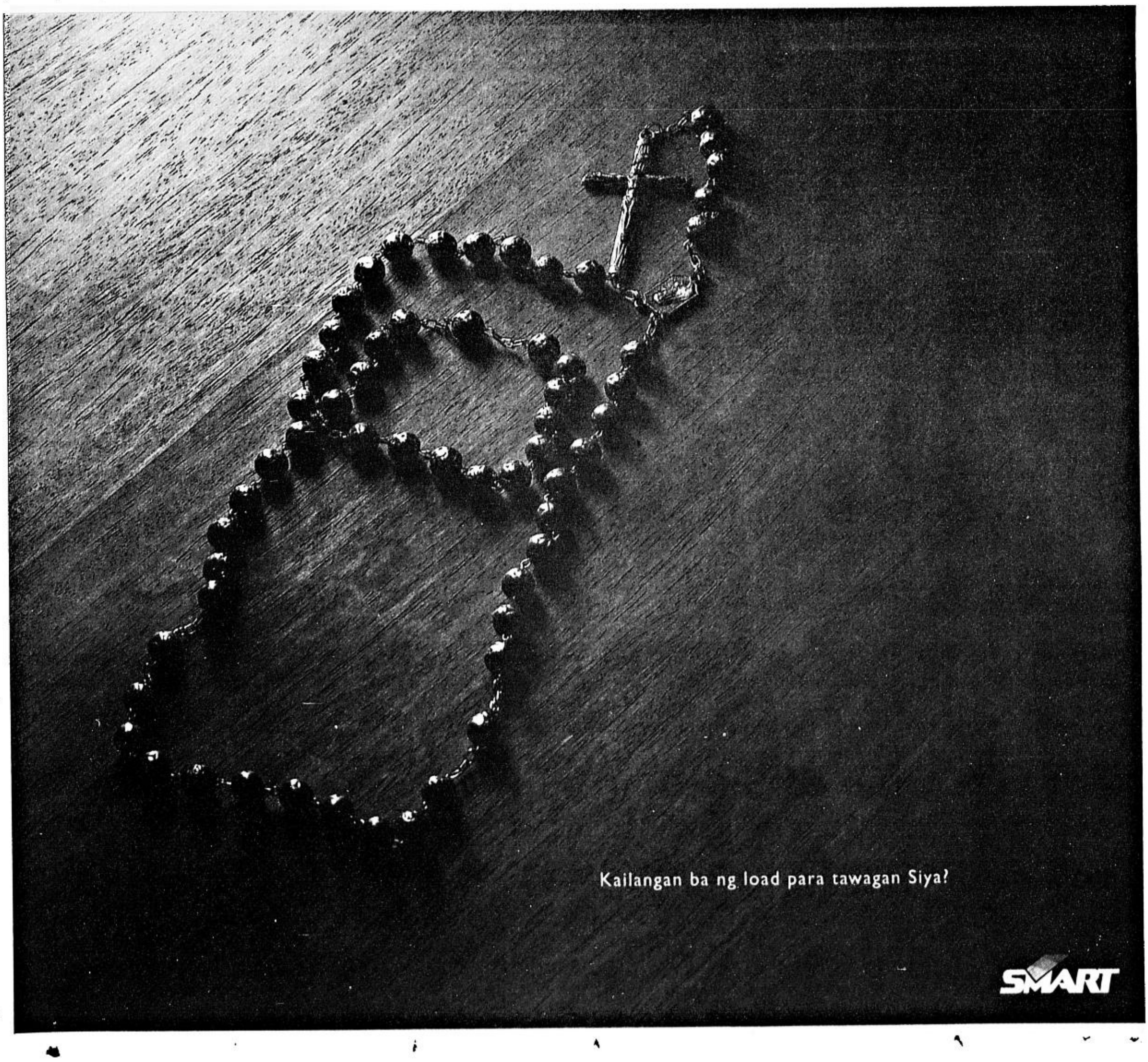
Nonsense

CATHOLICS and Muslims are alike; when they are in the minority they claim they are being persecuted and demand their "rights." But when they are in the majority they co-opt the government and make everyone else second-class citizens who are grudgingly allowed to exist.

The Europeans are right; there should be absolutely no connection between state and church and the latter must obey secular laws.

That the human race must have religion is nonsense. It is also cowardly, a way to absolve one's self from responsibility.

—ROBERT HANAN,
Unit 25-17 Bayview St.,
Runaway Bay,
Qld 4216, Australia



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FPJ scared of debate on sugar, says Negros exec

BACOLOD CITY—Presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. is afraid to enter into a debate with President Macapagal-Arroyo on the sugar industry because he does not understand its problems, said Rafael "Lito" Coscolluela, Ms Macapagal's campaign manager in Negros Occidental.

"That is precisely why GMA is inviting FPJ to talk about the problems of the sugar industry," he said. Poe on Saturday turned down the challenge of Ms Macapagal to debate on the issues involving the sugar industry, saying a debate would not solve the industry's problems.

"What is needed is to get down to work to come up with actual solutions," Poe was quoted as saying in reaction to Ms Macapagal's challenge.

Coscolluela said a majority of the sugar planters in Negros Occidental were for Ms Macapagal because of what she had done for the sugar industry.

He said the President had been responsive to the problems of the planters and had done a lot for the industry through her programs.

"People who are saying that the President has not done anything for the sugar industry must have been sleeping or are deaf," he said. "The President responded to all the problems of the industry."

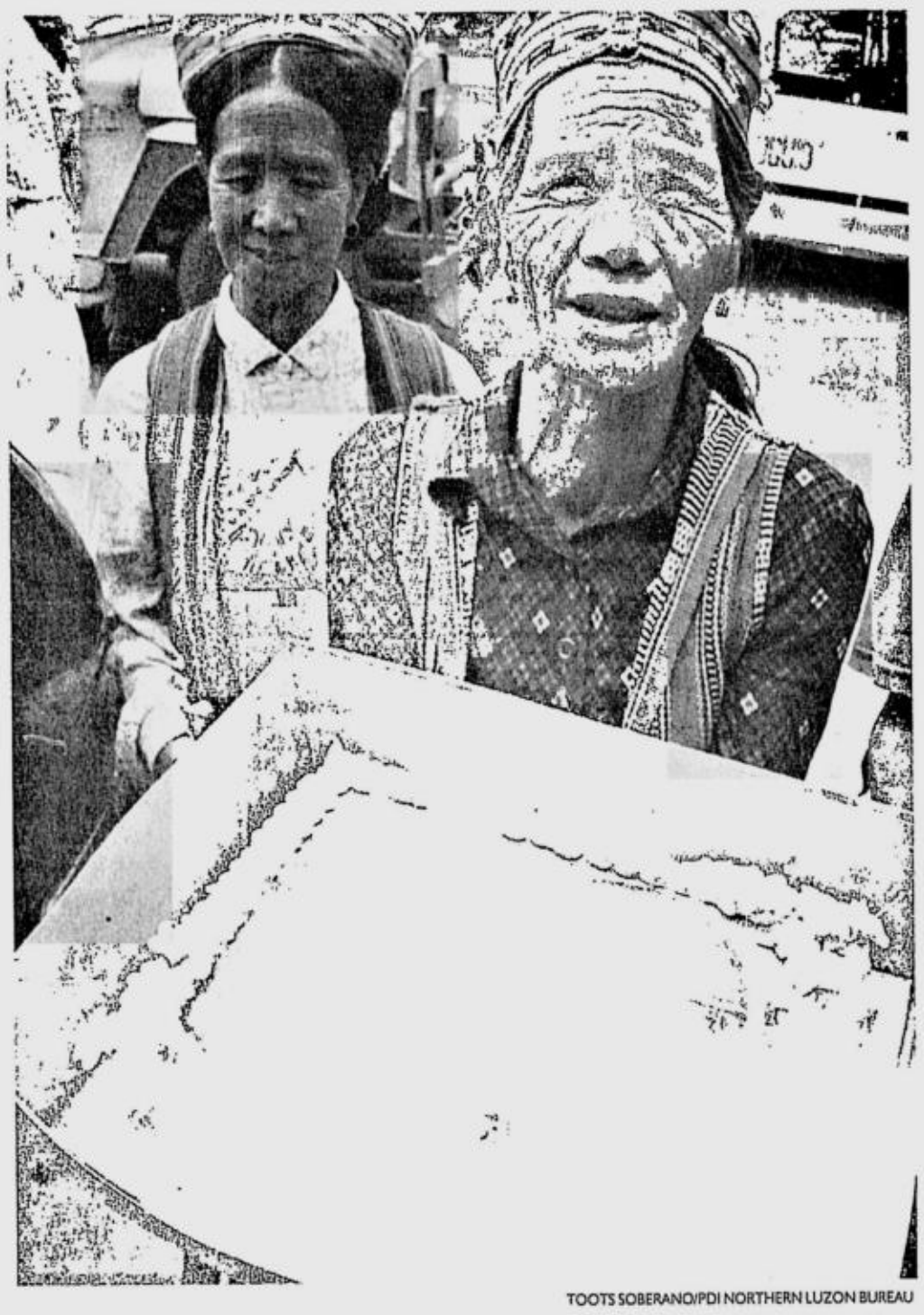
Coscolluela pointed out that the President already understands the industry. But Poe, on the other hand, he added, will need to listen to the leaders of the sugar industry in Negros Occidental so he can understand the problems and come up with solutions.

He said the programs that Poe promised for Negros Occidental were not detailed and were mere motherhood statements, meaning they were just meant to woo votes and not offer real solutions to the industry's problems.

Poe had said that if he was elected president, he would revitalize the sugar industry, protect the welfare of farmers and sugar workers, and assist small and medium enterprises, particularly in Negros Occidental.

The sugar industry in the province is suffering from a steady decline of prices blamed on, among other factors, smuggling of sugar and the continued importation and use by manufacturers of sugar substitutes.

Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau



TOOTS SOBERANO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

A BIRTHDAY gift from tribal folk in Baguio City for Ms Macapagal, who has challenged her closest rival, actor Fernando Poe Jr., to a debate on the sugar industry.

Aeta areas declared peace zones

OLONGAPO CITY—Army and police officials have agreed to declare all Aeta communities in Zambales as "peace zones," following reports that Aetas have been harassed by government troops operating in the hinterlands of the province in the past two months.

The agreement was reached after members of the Indigenous People Zambales Task Force asked government forces in a dialogue on March 31 to consider all ancestral domains occupied by various Aeta groups as "peace sanctuaries."

The task force has recorded several cases of human rights violations against Aetas, including the reported military operations in the towns of Palauig, San Felipe and Botolan, where Aeta communities are concentrated.

Army 2nd Lt. Noli Binbinon, headquarter commandant of the Army's 24th Infantry Battalion, heeded the appeal of the task force and promised that government troops would stay away from Aeta communities during military operations.

Binbinon also said they would stop recruiting Aetas as "military assets" to prevent them from being harassed or harmed by New People's Army rebels operating in the province.

Supt. Rogelio Aspe, Zambales police operations officer, assured the Aetas that the peace zone declaration would keep their communities safe from being caught in the crossfire between government troops and rebels.

"The police in the province would remain vigilant in securing their (Aetas) lives and properties and avoid further abuses against indigenous peoples," Aspe said.

Although Army and police officials could not assure if the NPA would honor the peace zones, an Aeta leader here said he would urge Aeta communities not to allow themselves to be recruited by rebels.

"We will not favor either side because we will be caught in a bind. We don't want Aetas to be used for or against the government, the NPA or our fellow tribe members,' said Carling Domulot, president of Pederasyon ng mga Aytang Samahan ng Sambales (Pass).

Domulot said there are at least 56 Aeta communities in Zambales.

The task force, with the help of the People's Recovery, Empowerment and Development Assistance (Preda) Foundation and the Social Action Center of Zambales, has recorded cases involving the killing of Aetas in Zambales. *Allan Macatuno, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Lacson bet in Iloilo jumps to Poe's camp

By Raj Padilla
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Presidential aspirant Panfilo Lacson lost his only candidate in Iloilo City to the camp of opposition rival Fernando Poe Jr.

Lawyer Romeo Gerochi told the INQUIRER that he arrived at a decision to bolt the Lacson camp for the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino (KNP) after deposed President Joseph Estrada called to convince him to switch to Poe's side.

"The invitation came as a surprise. I never expected it to come, but it did," said a beaming Gerochi, who is running for congressman of Iloilo City.

He said he assured Estrada that he would put up a strong campaign for Poe in Iloilo City.

Gerochi said he would have remained with the Lacson camp if the senator only had showed interest in him early in the campaign.

He said Lacson had visited Iloilo City many times but the senator had never told him if he wanted to be his candidate for Congress.

"I got a call from them last April 1, inviting me to meet Senator Lacson here on April 13. But I think it's too late for that. I have decided to help Mr. Poe instead," he said.

But what Gerochi has is a certificate of nomination from Estrada's Partido ng Masang Pilipino (PMP) and not from the KNP.

He clarified though that this wouldn't matter at all.

"It's given. Since PMP is one of the political parties comprising the KNP, I automatically become its official candidate for Congress in Iloilo City. Those who were present in the KNP rally last Saturday are witnesses to my being officially named as Poe's candidate for Congress," Gerochi said.

Still, Gerochi gave no assurance whether he would adopt Vice Mayor Victor Facultad as his candidate for mayor.

Like Gerochi, Facultad was also named as official candidate for mayor of the opposition coalition in last Friday's rally.

While Gerochi has no candidate for mayor, Facultad also has none for Congress. Gerochi only has city councilor Antonio Pesina Jr. as candidate for vice mayor and four others for the city council.

Facultad has city councilor Joshua Alim as candidate for vice mayor and a near complete slate for the city council.

Farmers back hybrid rice, thank GMA for technology

AGRICULTURE Secretary Cito Lorenzo thanked more than 1,000 farmers from Central Luzon who gathered in Lubao, Pampanga to show their support to President Macapagal-Arroyo on her birthday Monday.

In a statement, Lorenzo said the farmers came early and were excited about meeting the President who introduced the commercialization of hybrid rice which has improved their income.

"They wanted to show their appreciation and affection to the President who has been a consistent advocate of agricultural modernization and rice self-sufficiency," Lorenzo said.

A group of hybrid rice farmers belonging to areas outside Central Luzon also prepared a video tape containing their greetings and birthday wishes for her in different dialects which was presented by the Department of Agriculture to thousands of the President's supporters including K-4 senatorial candidates.

In the videotape, Antonio Villanueva, a hybrid rice champion of Ilocos Sur, led other farmers from Laguna, Pampanga, Cavite, Pangasinan and other parts of the country in wishing the President a happy birthday.

According to Villanueva, farmers like him who have shifted to planting hybrid rice have experienced higher yield and better income.

ELECTRIC SERVICE IN THESE AREAS WILL BE MOMENTARILY INTERRUPTED FOR FACILITIES UPGRADING AND OTHER LINE WORK.

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TUESDAY, APRIL 13, 2004

CAVITE (DASMARINAS AND BACOOR)
BETWEEN 8 00AM AND 3 00PM - PORTION OF CIRCUIT DASMARINAS 42DA
Portion of Molino-Paliparan Road from Salitran-Salawag Road to near Palico Road including San Miguel Subd., Metro South Medical Center, Meadow Park Homes, Eliza Homes, Max Villings, Citihomes Subd., Molino Homes I, Wood Estate Village, Emilus Mart, Perpetual Help College, KB Molino Concrete Products, 7-11, Petron Gas Station, Divine Light Academy, Town & Country West Subd., RFC Plaza, Molino Doctor's Hospital in Bacoor; and Pacific Art & Décor in Bgy Matnas na Sumpaloc, Dasmariñas

REASON: Various maintenance works along Molino-Paliparan Road in Dasmariñas and Bacoor, Cavite.

BATANGAS CITY
BETWEEN 8 30AM AND 9 00AM AND THEN BETWEEN 4 00PM AND 5 00PM - THE WHOLE OF CIRCUITS MAHABANG PARANG 31WZ AND 32WZ; AND BOLBOK 32ZZ
Bgys Soro-Soro Ilaya, Sitio Ilaya, Sitio Silangan, Bucal, Balete, Mahabang Parang and Batangas City Water District

REASON: Upgrading of facilities in Mahabang Parang, Batangas City.

RIZAL (MORONG)
BETWEEN 9 00AM AND 1 00PM - THE WHOLE OF CIRCUIT MORONG 11 XK
Portion of Provincial Road from Morong-Teresa Boundary to Morong General Hospital including Sumulong Road and Bgy San Jose

REASON: Maintenance works inside Meralco-Morong substation.

TUESDAY TO WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13-14, 2004
MAKATI CITY AND TAGUIG CITY
BETWEEN 11 00PM AND 11:30PM (TUE., 04/13/04) AND THEN BETWEEN 5 30AM AND 6 00AM (WED., 04/14/04) - PORTION OF CIRCUITS MALIBAY 53VJ AND 412VJ
Portion of Amorsolo St. from Lumbang St to near Tamarind Road in Dasmariñas Village including Ecology Village Delta Area (Units 85-130)in Kayamanan C, Makati City
Portion of Chino Roces Ave Extn. (Pasong Tamo Ext.) from Maricaban Creek to near Juliano St and Lawton Ave. including Nutrition Center of the Phils. and Population Center Foundation
Portion of Lawton Ave from East Service Road to and including HPA Road including Bayani Road, Phil Marines Headquarters, Phil Army Finance Center and Phil Army Officers Club in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City
Portion of East Service Road from TESDA to near Lawton Ave in Western Bicutan, Taguig City

BETWEEN 11 00PM (TUE., 04/13/04) AND 6 00AM (WED., 04/14/04) - PORTION OF CIRCUITS MALIBAY 53VJ AND 412VJ
Portion of East Service Road from near Lawton Ave and Juliano St to near TESDA in Bgy Western Bicutan, Taguig City

REASON: Urgent relocation of poles affected by MMDA road widening along East Service Road near TESDA, Bicutan, Taguig.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14, 2004
RIZAL (CAINTA)
BETWEEN 12 01AM AND 5 00AM - THE WHOLE OF CIRCUIT ST ANTHONY 61ZN
Venus Steel and Midland Steel Corp

REASON: Various maintenance works on 115-kV facilities along Marcos Highway and Ortigas Ave. Extn. in Pasig and Cainta.

MAKATI CITY (URDANETA)
BETWEEN 9 00AM AND 2 00PM - THE WHOLE OF CIRCUIT FORBES PARK 17VC
Major portion of Urdaneta Village excluding portion of Real St from Sta. Potenciana St to Urdaneta Ave

REASON: Repair works inside Meralco-Forbes Park substation.

WEDNESDAY TO THURSDAY, APRIL 14-15, 2004
VALENZUELA CITY
BETWEEN 11 30PM AND 12 00MN (WED., 04/14/04) AND THEN BETWEEN 4.00AM AND 4 30AM (THU., 04/15/04) - PORTION OF CIRCUIT MEYCAUAYAN 45YM
Portion of T Santiago St from near M. Gregorio St to near Continental Steel in Bgy Lingunan including Industrial Subd.

BETWEEN 11 30PM (WED., 04/14/04) AND 4 30AM (THU., 04/15/04) - PORTION OF CIRCUIT MEYCAUAYAN 45YM
Portion of T Santiago St and Dulalia Road from MKK Steel to Canumay Creek including P. I Metal Mfg Co., Supersonic Mfg., Phil United Rubber Products, Airey Mfg. Corp., New Youngster Dev't Corp and Continental Steel in Bgy Lingunan

REASON: Replacement and correction of leaning poles along T. Santiago St. in Bgy. Lingunan, Valenzuela City.

LAGUNA (NAGCARLAN AND LILIW)
BETWEEN 11.30PM (WED., 04/14/04) AND 7.30AM (THU., 04/15/04) - PORTION OF CIRCUIT BOTOCAN 41D
Portion of Cross Country from Bgy Bambang in Nagcarlan to Bgy Sto. Angel in Liliw including Nagcarlan town proper, Bgys. Ilaya, Alibungbungin, Talahib, Palayan, Yukos, Buboy, Taytay, San Francisco, Malinao, Balinacon, Oples and Sinipian in Nagcarlan, Palina and Laguan in Liliw.

REASON: Replacement of rotten poles in various places in Nagcarlan, Laguna.

THURSDAY, APRIL 15, 2004
CAVITE (BACOOR)
BETWEEN 8 00AM AND 3 00PM - PORTION OF CIRCUIT ABUBOT 39XZ
Portion of Gen E Aguinaldo Highway from Mary Homes to near Queen's Row Road including Melissa Homes I, Kalayaan Homes, Georgetown Heights Subd., Duplex Homes, Feliza Subd., Camelia Homes Springville West and Annaville Subd in Bgy Molino 3.

REASON: Various maintenance works along Gen. E. Aguinaldo Highway in Bgy. Molino 3, Bacoor, Cavite.

FRIDAY, APRIL 16, 2004
RIZAL (CAINTA)
BETWEEN 12 01AM AND 5 00AM - THE WHOLE OF CIRCUIT ST ANTHONY 61ZN
Venus Steel and Midland Steel Corp

REASON: Various maintenance works on 115-kV facilities along Marcos Highway and Ortigas Ave. Extn. in Pasig and Cainta.

SUNDAY, APRIL 18, 2004
CAVITE
BETWEEN 8 00AM AND 8 30AM AND THEN BETWEEN 4 30PM AND 5 00PM - THE WHOLE OF CIRCUIT ABUBOT 37XZ
Portion of Gen E Aguinaldo Highway from Meralco-Abubot substation to Gov D. Mangubat Ave
Along Gov D. Mangubat Ave. from Gen. E Aguinaldo Highway to Congressional South Road including University Medical Center, Jopnuen Realty, Student Village, Bgy Burol, Manuela Village, Summerwind IV and Southcrest Village in Dasmariñas

REASON: Transco maintenance works along Dasmariñas-Abubot-Rosario 115-kV lines.

CAVITE (BACOOR AND IMUS)
BETWEEN 9 00AM AND 11 00AM - THE WHOLE OF CIRCUIT IMUS 34WK
Portion of Gen E Aguinaldo Highway from Meralco-Imus substation to Bayan Luma Road in Imus
Along Bayan Luma Road from Aguinaldo Highway to and including Bo Manalo, Iglesia ni Kristo, Bgy. Alapan II, Bliss Housing in Gen Trias
Mary-Cris Homes, Bo Bucandala, Villa Feliciana Subd, and Sarreal Subd in Imus
Along Malagasang Road from Bayan Luma Road to near Christian Joan School including Pag-asa Subd., Bgy. Malagasang I, Manuela Subd., MWSS, Mandarin Homes II, Hayag Motorworks and Machine Shop and Francis Rice Mill in Imus
Along Alapan Road from Bayan Luma Road to and including Bo. Medicion, Bo. Alapan, Lakersfield Homes, Alfonso Village, Westwood Homes, Bgy Pag-asa, Mikesell Subd and Medicion St Imus
Along Carsadang Bago from Alapan Road to near Gen. F Yengco Ave. including Narra Homes, Gardenville Subd., Villa Lasquette and Woodstock Homes in Imus

REASON: Preventive maintenance and testing works inside Meralco-Imus substation.

QUEZON CITY
BETWEEN 9 00AM AND 9:30AM AND THEN BETWEEN 2 30PM AND 3 00PM - PORTION OF CIRCUIT KAMUNING 426VP
Portion of Don Alejandro Roces Ave and Scout Magbanua St. from near Tomas Morato Ave to Panay Ave including Scout Lazcano St., Family Health Spa, NJP Printmaker, Digitel, Amoranto Stadium and portion of Mother Ignacia Ave. in Bgy Laging Handa
Along Panay Ave from Scout Magbanua St to near Scout Chuatoco St. including Maxima Equipment Co., Florian Enterprises and Capitol Medical Center in Bgy. Laging Handa.

BETWEEN 9 00AM AND 3 00PM - PORTION OF CIRCUIT KAMUNING 426VP
Portion of Scout Reyes and Scout Chuatoco Sts from Don Alejandro Ave. to and including Ramcar Center in Bgy Laging Handa

REASON: Various maintenance works along Scout Reyes and Scout Chuatoco Sts. in Bgy. Laging Handa, Quezon City.

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INQUIRER *Northern Luzon*

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Rolando B. Fernandez

Graphic movie on Jesus' pain moves Cutud village's 'Christ'

By Tonette Orejas
City of San Fernando

TRUE, Ruben Enaje has had himself nailed to the cross 17 times since Good Friday of 1986. But despite his holding the longest record of doing the excruciating and bloody form of *panata* (devotion) in Cutud, the City of San Fernando's version of Calvary, Enaje said Hollywood actor Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ" outdid him in the showing of the "real pain and sacrifice of Jesus."

"My religion classes in elementary and high school said Jesus went through a lot of pain to save us from sin. Priests preach the same. Every year, I go through the pain of being crucified but I never really fully understood the agony of Christ until I saw that film," the 43-year-old carpenter told the INQUIRER in halting Filipino.

Enaje watched the movie from a counterfeit compact disc he bought last month in Manila. Practically the entire neighborhood in Barangay San Pedro Cutud's Purok Uno where he lives has seen the movie, its mass viewing care of some neighbors with CD players.

"*Nangingilabot raw sila* (They said they had goose bumps)," he said of his neighbors' reaction to the movie that Gibson produced, directed and co-wrote.

Last week, Enaje took time off from painting streamers and billboards for local candidates to catch the movie that started showing in two malls here on March 31.

"I cried again while watching it," Enaje said on Sunday as he began repainting the three big wooden crosses that would be used in the village's reenactment of the Via Crucis (The Way of the Cross).

Accompanied by some 1,000 flagellants, the rite is going to end at noontime on a hill carved out from Mt. Pinatubo's lahar that buried Barangay San Pedro Cutud in 1995.

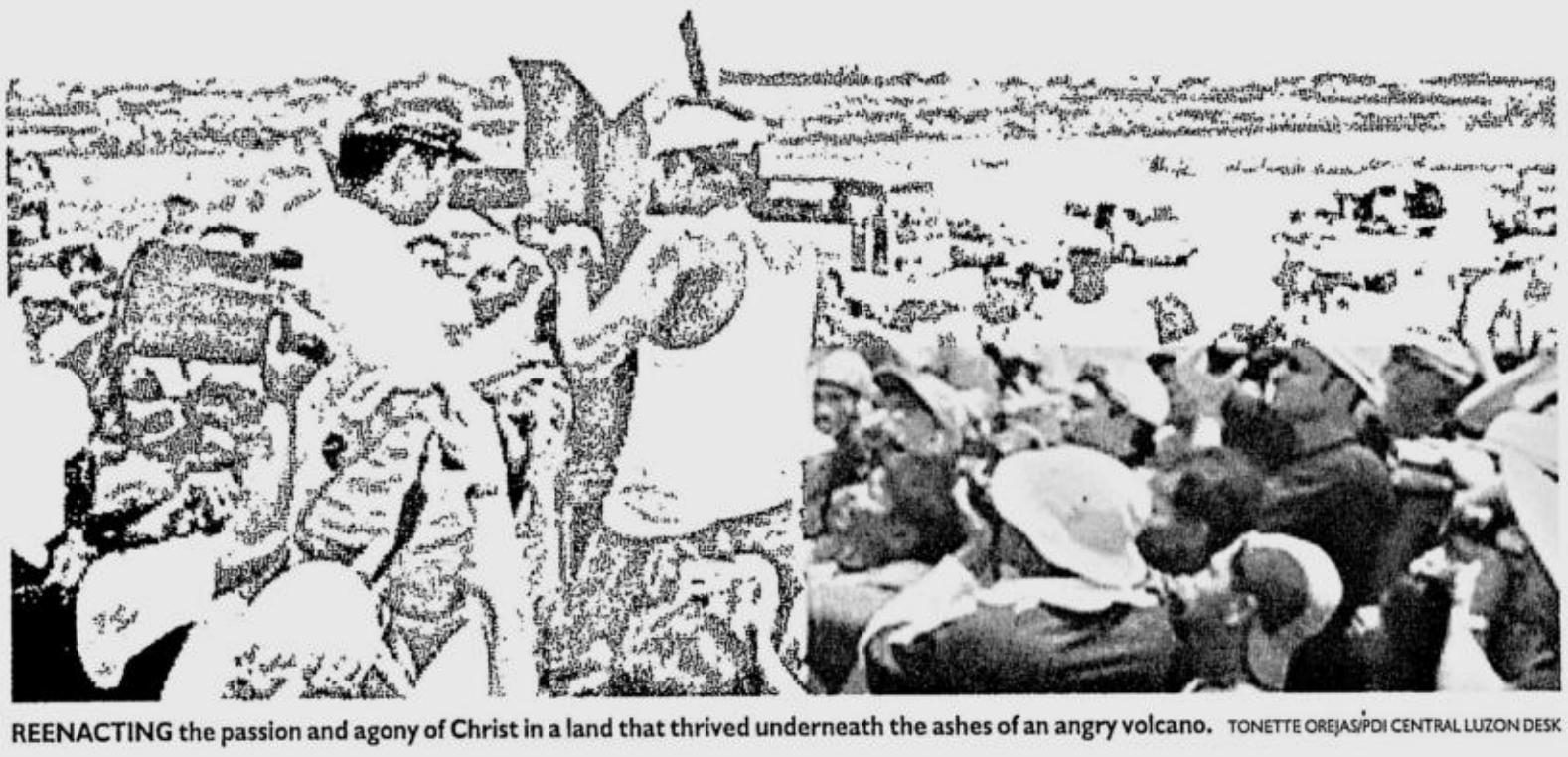
According to him, the "Passion's" depiction of the last hours of Christ was "humbling."

Gibson's film, he said, served to remind that he and the 16 other men who are going to reenact the crucifixion in Cutud on Good Friday could not approximate the agony of Christ.

"Ours is just a devotion, a reminder and an invitation to reflect on the life of Christ," he said. He said the actor who portrayed Christ, Jim Caviezel, was "lucky and blessed because the opportunity to relive and teach the life of the Lord fell on him."

In his case, Enaje took to the cross after he fell from a three-story building whose exterior he was painting in 1985.

He called that a miracle, having suffered no wounds, broken bones or internal bleeding. "They say I looked like I was only sleeping," Enaje recalled of how his co-workers described him minutes after the fall.



REENACTING the passion and agony of Christ in a land that thrived underneath the ashes of an angry volcano. TONETTE OREJAS/PDI CENTRAL LUZON DESK

A second life

The next year, he decided to express his gratitude for what to him was the "blessing of second life" by joining the 10 men in the village who regularly took to the cross every Good Friday.

According to old residents in San Fernando, the practice was begun in the 1950s by itinerant faith healer Apo Temyong.

Before the late 1980s when the government started promoting the mass flagellation and crucifixion rites as tourism events, the early devotees used only hemp ropes to tie themselves to the cross.

The practice persisted and turned more authentic. It continued despite discouragement from the Catholic Church that found the rites to be harsh and too focused on the suffering than the risen Christ.

Enaje's own thanksgiving lasted 15 years. Every year, two three-inch long, alcohol-soaked steel nails pierced his palms that are used year round to difficult labor.

"The Church says that we do is wrong but I say that this has strengthened my faith. And I live it by obediently following the Commandments," he said.

Although he has completed his *panata*, he decided to extend the devotion to six years more until 2007.

Two years ago, he took on the role of the main Kristo, replacing Chito Sangalang who acted that part for 15 years.

As the lead Kristo, Enaje will reenact the sufferings of Jesus from the time of his capture up to his death on Calvary.

Via Crucis

In Pampanga, only Cutud does this street dramatization in very elaborate manner, care of theater director Allan Navarro.

Navarro, 48, uses the same script that his grandfather wrote almost 50 years ago. The Archdiocese of San Fernando's museum at the University of the Assumption here has the original manuscript.

It is only in rehearsals during Holy Week that Navarro brings out the only replica of that script, which has seven pages and composed in rhymed form.

Like in zarsuelas, Navarro will coach the lines of the actors, including those of Enaje's.

For his devotion and the play, Enaje has grown his hair long. He also has a set of costumes that by this time are already tattered and yellowed by old blotches of blood.

On Good Friday, he said he has three pleas to make as he is suspended on the cross for 10 minutes.

"Firstly, I will implore God's mercy to make the elections peaceful. The elections are a month away but so many people have already been killed or wounded. Secondly, I will pray for unity, peace and prosperity in our country. So many people are suffering from poverty now. Thirdly, I will pray for my family's safety and good health," Enaje said.

Bit players take key roles in village's yearly Holy Week drama

LIKE IN A PLAY, several characters in Barangay San Pedro Cutud's bloody reenactment of Christ's sufferings are, as always, upstaged by the main protagonists: More than 15 men and a woman taking to real-life crucifixion and hundreds of men flagellating themselves.

But the roles of Pedro and Conchita Yutuc, both makers of wounding tools, and Allan Navarro, the director in the street dramatization of the Via Crucis (The Way of the Cross), are no less significant.

Through Pedro's *panabad* (glass shards fitted into a layer of red cement laid on wooden pads), the flagellants are able to get the "safe and clean" wounds needed to make the blood spurt during the hours-long rite of whipping.

Conchita's *burilyos* (bamboo pads fastened to whips made of braided abaca and cloths) are the gears that flagellants use to hit their backs.

Navarro, 48, is the third-generation director of the Good Friday's theatrical presentation of the final chapter on the Christ's life, continuing what his grandfather Ricardo began in 1955 and what his father Rolando had taken on during the 1970s.

They said their roles are as essential as that of Ruben Enaje, the man who acts the role of Christ; those performing the parts of Pontius Pilate, the Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalene, Veronica, Simon of Cyrene, Simon Peter and the centurions; or flagellants who usher Christ's path to the local Calvary in Cutud's Purok Kuwatro.

Pedro and Conchita, by creating wounding tools, believed they are completing the requisites of the village's unique observance of *Semana Santa*.

Hard penance

"It's a tradition. We have to do our bit," Pedro, 58, said of their seasonal toil on what may be symbols of hard penance banned by the Catholic Church.

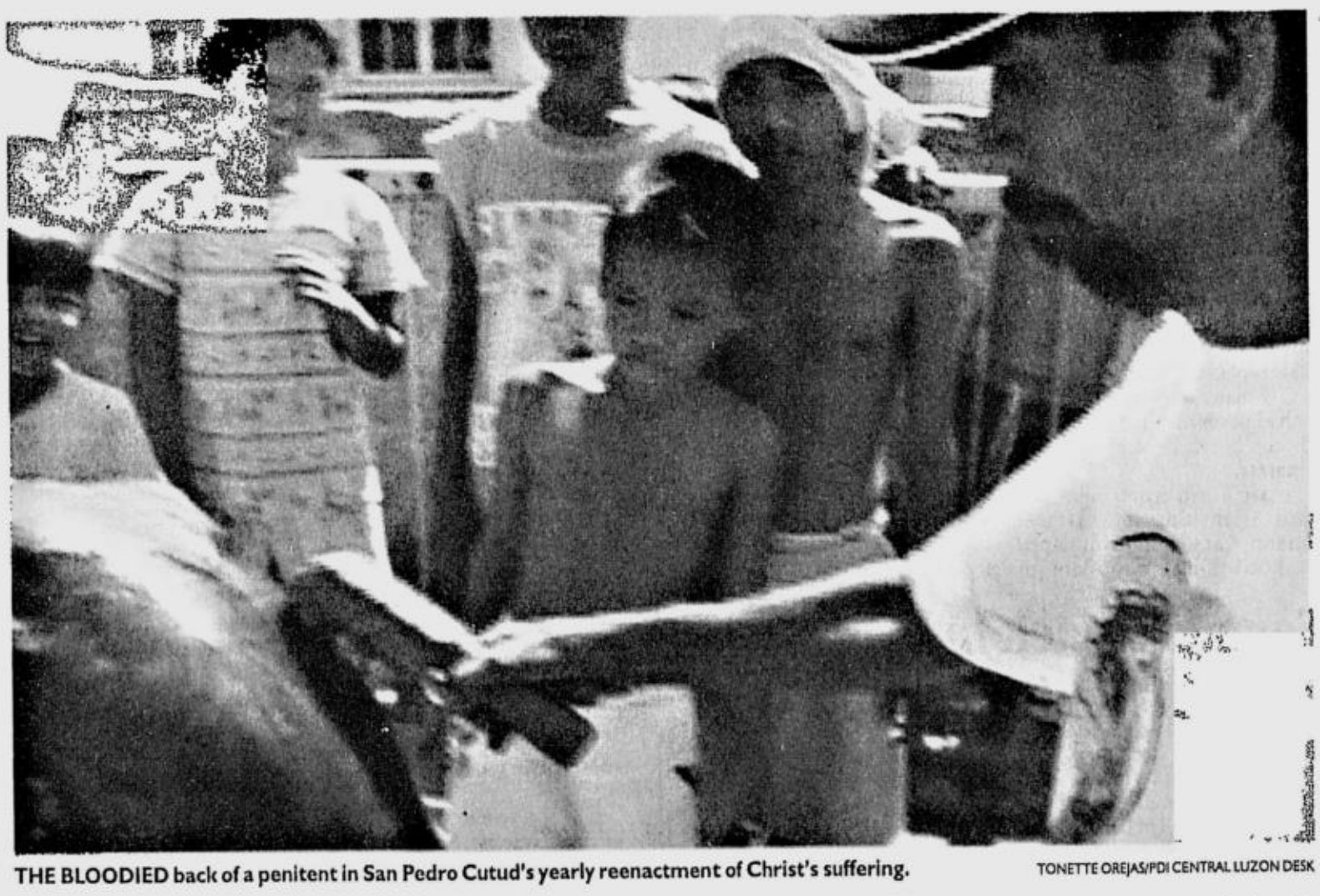
Conchita, 53, learned burilyos-making from Pedro. Her husband, then barely out of elementary school, learned the rudiments of making the burilyos and the panabad from his late father Juan.

For this Good Friday, Conchita finished 50 burilyos. Each is sold for P200. The price can go as low as P50 for penitents who are poor.

Flagellants usually keep these for years, not replacing these until their devotion is over. These are simply washed of blood, soaked in alcohol and kept behind the family's altar until the next Good Friday rite, Conchita said.

Some come to her to seek substitutes for lost bamboo pads. By tradition, Conchita said the number of pads that fall off is equivalent to the number of years that a flagellant has to add to the length of his devotion.

Pedro made more than 50 panabad, each of which takes a day to finish. The difficult part is shaving the glass to a perfect sharp edge, he said.



THE BLOODIED back of a penitent in San Pedro Cutud's yearly reenactment of Christ's suffering. TONETTE OREJAS/PDI CENTRAL LUZON DESK

He keeps one of the panabad to himself. In the village, Pedro acts the part of the *manabad* (one who wounds). Before him, flagellants hunch their back, awaiting the calculated thrust of Pedro's tool on their skin. In one fast thump, Pedro can give them nine slits. In less than two minutes, he can scar the back of a flagellant with a total of 72 wounds.

Pedro said only foreign tourists had taken a liking for his panabad. He said some had bought the bloodied pieces, explaining they were keeping these as "souvenir items."

"Others wanted me to carve the images of the Virgin Mary or Jesus (on the pads) but I said I can't do that. But they always like those that have blood. I am amazed," Pedro said.

On Good Friday, starting at 11 a.m., Navarro will direct the zarzuela-like drama that his grandfather began as a "form of worship."

Like the zarzuela, Navarro's work comes with a prompter who reads the lines for the main actors.

"Back then, my grandfather spent for everything, from the costumes to the food because the (reenactment) of the Via Crucis was his way of demonstrating his Christian faith. My father continued the practice as a form of penance," Navarro recalled.

In recent years, he said the village council had been subsidizing the cost of putting up the drama. He takes pride in still being able to stage the Via Crucis, which is not done elsewhere in Central Luzon. *Tonette Orejas*

Warnings fail to stop bets' posters

DESPITE repeated warnings from the Commission on Elections, more and more posters are cluttering walls and posts along streets in Eastern Metro Manila.

Candidates have turned Amang Rodriguez Avenue, the major road that connects Marikina City and Pasig City, into a collage of posters since the local campaign period kicked off two weeks ago.

The posters are particularly ugly after it rains, when they peel and litter the streets.

Under Comelec rules, candidates are allowed to place posters only in designated poster areas. It is prohibited to paste campaign materials on walls, lamp posts and trees.

The posters show Bobby Eusebio, Echie Ramos, Mac Cruz, Ely dela Cruz, Roberto "Apia" Benito, Roman Romulo, Toti Cariño and Romy Medina, all running for local posts in Pasig City. Cariño's posters are even placed on orange street dividers.

Party-list groups include Bayan Muna, Sanlakas, Partido ng Masa and ASAP.

Meanwhile, national bets include President Macapagal-Arroyo, Fernando Poe Jr., Noli de Castro, Rodolfo Biazon, Heherson Alvarez, Ernesto Herrera and Jamby Madrigal.

"I don't understand why these candidates continue to place their posters there," lamented Pasig City Election Officer Romeo Alcazar in an interview. *Luige del Puerto.*

BARBERS BROTHERS' LIBEL CASE

GMA 7 news anchor sued

By Tina Santos

BROTHERS Surigao del Norte Rep. Robert Ace and Surigao del Norte Gov. Robert Lyndon Barbers, have filed libel charges against GMA 7 news anchor Mike Enriquez and four others for allegedly depicting them as crooked politicians.

Aside from Enriquez, who hosts the public affairs program "Imbestigador," also charged before the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office were Jaileen Jimeno, executive producer; Cruz Yuipco, Manuel Kong and Maritone Segovia, interviewees and resource persons in the show.

The Barberses claimed that the respondents, on the weekly program "Imbestigador" aired last March 20, produced, broadcast and televised an episode entitled "Pera Palit Bato" about a number of Surigaonons selling their kidneys in exchange for money.

The respondents allegedly said that the Surigaonons have become so impoverished that they resorted to the extreme and gruesome way of selling their kidneys just to earn a living because the Barberses, their political leaders, have neglected them.

'Berdugos'

The Barberses also claimed that the show publicly and maliciously imputed that they misappropriated government funds for the completion of roads in Surigao del Norte.

The brothers said they were also accused of being "berdugos," that they nurture a "culture of fear" in the province, and all the businesses there are owned by them.

The Barberses added that they were also depicted as politicians who are only visible during election time, then disappear afterwards.

Construction of new north rail tracks set

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

IT WAS once a busy station, teeming with people waiting for the train. But for more than two decades now, the train station in Caloocan City has remained abandoned.

But should things go as planned, the station will soon see construction workers and, after three years, passengers waiting for a train going to Clark Air Field, Pampanga.

Construction of new rail tracks from Caloocan City to Malolos, Bulacan, will formally begin two weeks from now, Northrail president Jose Cortez Jr. said during the project's groundbreaking ceremony the other day.

Twenty-three engineers from China have arrived to oversee the project, House Speaker Jose de Venecia also said.

He also announced that the rehabilitation of another railway system from Caloocan City to Calamba, Laguna, would start next month.

It will be financed by the South Korean government.

Another rail system to connect Calamba and Matnog, Sorsogon, will also be financed by the Chinese government.

Railway systems are also planned in the Visayas (Iloilo City to Panay) and in Mindanao (Cagayan De Oro City to Iligan City).

Ateneo de Tuguegarao alumni homecoming

THE ATENEO de Tuguegarao Alumni Association will hold a grand homecoming April 30-May 2 at the University of St. Louis in Tuguegarao City. The Class of 1954 is the Golden Jubilarians and is responsible for the preparations. For details, please call Eduardo S. Alcaraz at 929-0777, or Dr. Vicente B. Valdepeñas Jr. at 523-3983, or Alfredo Q. Kanapi at 741-0611.

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MCARTHUR HI-WAY
URDANETA, PANGASINAN
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Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

Cop watch shifts to housing areas

By Luige del Puerto

STARTING today, the police shift their forces from streets to neighborhoods as thousands of residents leave Metro Manila for the five-day holiday.

The police, however, warned that their forces would not be enough to cover all neighborhoods.

"If possible, somebody should stay in the house," urged Marikina Police chief Sr. Supt. Felipe Rojas Jr.

Marikina is a largely residential city.

Chief Supt. Oscar Valenzuela, head of the Eastern Police District, said if the whole family is leaving town, they should ask a trusted neighbor to keep an eye on their home.

"Firmly lock the doors and secure the gates. Reinforce locks whenever necessary," he said.

Burglars traditionally strike during the Holy Week, when residents head for the provinces.

Valenzuela said the police have begun talking to security forces in subdivisions and villas about security measures during the holiday.

Guards are asked to be extra vigilant, and to conduct more patrols, he said.

Guards and neighbors should be particularly wary of "lipat-bahay" vans entering subdivisions, he added.

"Check the house they are going to, and verify the information they have," he said, adding neighbors should immediately call the owner of the house when in doubt.

He said barangay watchmen—at least those who are staying put in Metro Manila—would be helping the police in patrolling communities.

Here are other tips on how best to secure homes while the family is away:

- Ask a neighbor to collect the mail and other deliveries. Stacked mail tells burglars that no one is home.
- Leave a bulb open inside and outside the house. Burglars think people are inside if the lights are open.
- Make sure to unplug all appliances to prevent fire.
- Don't leave valuables, such as jewelry, on tables or beds. Place them in a vault or a safe.

Rojas said burglars tend to avoid houses with pet dogs. As a security measure, keeping dogs is wise, he said.

POLICE officials inspect security at a bus terminal in Quezon City Tuesday. JOAN BONDOC

Running mates root for rival bets

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THEY run under the same local party. They campaign for their political tandem. But they support and campaign for different presidential candidates.

Navotas Mayor Toby Tiangco is campaigning for presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr., while his vice mayor Gardy Cruz is supporting President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Both reelectionists, Tiangco and Cruz are running mates under the local party Partido Navoteno. Tiangco is running for mayor against Salvador Monroy and Freddie Marquez, while Cruz is running for vice mayor against Patrick Joseph Javier.

So aside from their common posters with the 12 candidates for councilor of their local party, Tiangco has posters showing him with Poe, while Cruz' posters carry the logo of Lakas-NUCD, one of the political parties under Ms Macapagal's K4.

How does this setup work?

Tiangco said yesterday they respect each other's national affiliation and remained united in the local level. He said that their local partnership was based on one common program for the town.

"People will vote for us based on our programs for Navotas and not on our national affiliation," Tiangco said.

To avoid hassles, Cruz said they had laid down "ground rules" during campaign.

In their common rallies (for the local Partido Navoteno), no one speaks about national candidates. But in their own campaign gimmicks, both of them could speak about Poe or Ms Macapagal.

"We tease each other sometimes. But we just respect our choices," Tiangco added.

Only 1 kidnap suspect still unidentified

ONLY one of the four suspected kidnappers who were killed during a shootout with National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force operatives in Navotas last Thursday remains unidentified.

Security guard John Alegarbes Elizalde, 27, of Bagong Barrio, Caloocan City, was identified by his relatives at the Funeraria Eusebio the other day, case investigator PO3 Charlie Bontigao said.

Reynaldo Misa Briones of Biñan, Laguna, was earlier identified through his driver's license, while Danilo Oreta Cailo of Tangos, Navotas, had also been identified by his relatives.

The fourth suspect's body is still with Funeraria Thaddean.

The only suspect who survived the shootout, Christopher Elizalde, 26, of Malabon City, is now under Naktf custody.

Naktf had alleged that the suspects were members of the Allan Balimbingan kidnap-for-ransom group.

On Thursday, Naktf conducted an operation against the group after receiving information that the suspects were to strike in Navotas. *Edson Tandoc Jr.*

Tanong ng Bayan
INQ TV
Ngayong Alas-10 Ng Gabi
Ano ang pinakamabigat na pasanin ng Pinoy?
Parang gumagapang sa kalbaryo. Ganyan inilalarawan ang bahagyang angat-sadsad na usad ng ating bansa. Pero ano nga ba ang krus na nagpapahirap sa mga Filipino? Ang sagot nina Fr. Jerry Orbos, SVD; Yoly Ong ng Campaigns & Grey; at PCGG Chairman Haydee Yorac. Ngayong alas-10 ng gabi sa InqTV on ABC.
ABC

'Slow' response probed

NATIONAL Capital Region Police Office Director Ricardo de Leon yesterday ordered a probe on the response of the walk-the-beat patrols following the armored van heist at a Quezon City mall, which left a security guard dead on Tuesday afternoon.

He tasked the Central Police District to investigate why police patrollers assigned to man the vicinity of the mall took so long to respond to the robbery incident.

LOTTO RESULTS

SIX DIGIT

3 2 4 5 4 7

SUERTRES (In exact order) 9 1 8

6/42 Luzon

16 21 24 30 34 41

Vis-Min

9 17 19 20 34 40

SPORTS

E-mail: pr_sports@inquirer.com.ph

Editor **Teddyvic S. Melendres**
Assistant Editor **Edwin M. Villanueva**

SPORTS TV
Compiled by L. Manguiat

BASKETBALL: NBA-Raptors vs Cavs; 8:30 a.m. (r-8 p.m.); Solar Sports—With its playoff hopes fading fast, Cleveland attempts to stay alive for a post-season berth when it faces Toronto.

Vintage NBA-Julius Erving; 11 a.m.; Solar Sports—Long before Jordan, Kobe and LeBron played above the rim, Dr. J. was the man.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

Asia now rooting for Pacquiao

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

THIS being Lent, Manny Pacquiao would do well to ponder on the words of ring immortal Flash Elorde.

Winning the world crown, Da Flash once mumbled to this reporter, is just the baptism.

You get your confirmation, Elorde solemnly added, only after you've made one or two worthy title defenses.

In the seven years that he reigned as world junior lightweight champ, Elorde had more than confirmed his greatness.

His stature, in fact, could no longer be measured just by the number of times he had successfully defended his crown against assorted foreign foes.

Meanwhile, Pacquiao, although he would be going for the twin (IBF/WBA) featherweight belts of Juan Manuel Marquez, is generally looked upon as the defending champ in the much-awaited clash in Las Vegas.

In fact, Pacquiao has been hailed as the consensus world featherweight king following his conquest of Mexican ring idol Marco Antonio Barrera in Texas last November.

***

One good thing about Pacquiao is that he's fully aware of the importance and magnitude of his May 8 fight.

As ringside pundits love to put it, Pacquiao will be staking all the marbles against Marquez.

So far, there have been heart-warming reviews of Pacquiao's training, how he had cracked the rib of one sparmate, before decking another aspirant right in the first round a couple of days later.

Feeds from the Marquez camp only come in trickles, but the peppery Mexican is obviously training harder than Pacquiao.

Marquez is also fully aware of his mission: to avenge Barrera's defeat and restore the shattered Mexican boxing pride.

Marquez can be expected to surpass himself in a bid to shame Pacquiao and prevent the confirmation of the RP ring sensation before the eyes of the world.

***

Marquez, no doubt, will enjoy the hometown edge in Las Vegas as hordes of Mexican fight fans will rush to the championship site to root for their *paisano*.

However, Pacquiao will not be lacking in *kababayan* support.

Lando Hiso, a former national cyclist now based in Chicago, said he has made advanced booking with a group of friends at the MGM Grand in time for the May 8 fistiana.

The same movement is definitely being planned by Pinoys from other US states.

Of course, the main bulk in the Pacquiao ringside cheering squad will be provided by *kababayans* who will rush in from nearby LA.

Ronnie Nathanielsz, quoting US sources, said ticket sales have zoomed with Mexicans expected to come across the border for the big fight night.

Rod Nazario, Pacquiao's business manager, said that the "coming fight is fast shaping up into a battle between Asians and Hispanics."

Nazario added that Filipino boxing fans in the US are now being supported by fight fans from the Orient, mainly Viets and Thais, against the Mexicans who have been joined by other Latinos.

In short, it's not only the Philippines Pacquiao will be carrying on his mighty shoulders come fight time.

This early, he has started to be looked upon by fellow Orientals as their own champ.

And our Asian neighbors have every reason to be proud of our fearless, homebred knockout artist.

***

Respected boxing expert Larry Merchant, an avowed Pacquiao admirer, said the Filipino ring hero stands heads and shoulders over other Asian boxing champs in that he has both speed and power.

Merchant noted that, while most other Asian champs only have either speed or power, Pacquiao happens to possess both qualities.

Pacquiao, a certified kayo artist and a splendid speedster, is a sweet rarity.

As to Elorde's teaching on the confirmation of greatness, there's no denying Pacquiao has been training very religiously at the Wild Card Boxing Club of trainer-of-the-year Freddie Roach, not only in keeping with the spirit of Lent.

Hermit-like as Pacquiao is in training, there'll be no stopping the tested Asian wildcat from jumping in with his numbing, relentless shots come championship night.

As things stand now, however, he may have only an even 50-50 chance of winning.

Sunkist stuns Hapee

GAMES TUESDAY (*Pasig Sports Center*)
2 p.m.—Lee Pipes vs Montaña
4 p.m.—BluStar vs Toyota Otis

By Marc Anthony Reyes

SUNKIST-UST got itself nailed on the cross, but rose again after three minutes.

The Tigers experienced their own version of the Passion just before the Holy Week break, surviving an endgame agony to upset defending champion Hapee Toothpaste, 69-66, yesterday and remain unbeaten in the PBL 2nd Unity Cup at the Pasig Sports Center.

Wasting a 10-point lead with less than three minutes left (69-59), Sunkist got the creeps as Hapee's Mark Macapagal hit two three-pointers and a freethrow. Time ran out for Hapee, however, and Sunkist, despite failing to score in that span, escaped with its third straight victory.

The Teeth Sparklers of coach Junel Baculi suffered their first loss in three games.

Sunkist coach Nel Prado said he's just glad Alex Compton chose to play despite a sprained left ankle.

The Philippine-born American point guard scored a team-high 18 points but was silent in the fourth quarter. His splendid ball-handling, however, fended off his counterparts in the final 56 seconds.

Welcoat Paints squandered a 28-point lead but still had plenty to spare to defeat Viva Mineral Water-FEU, 89-80, in the second game.

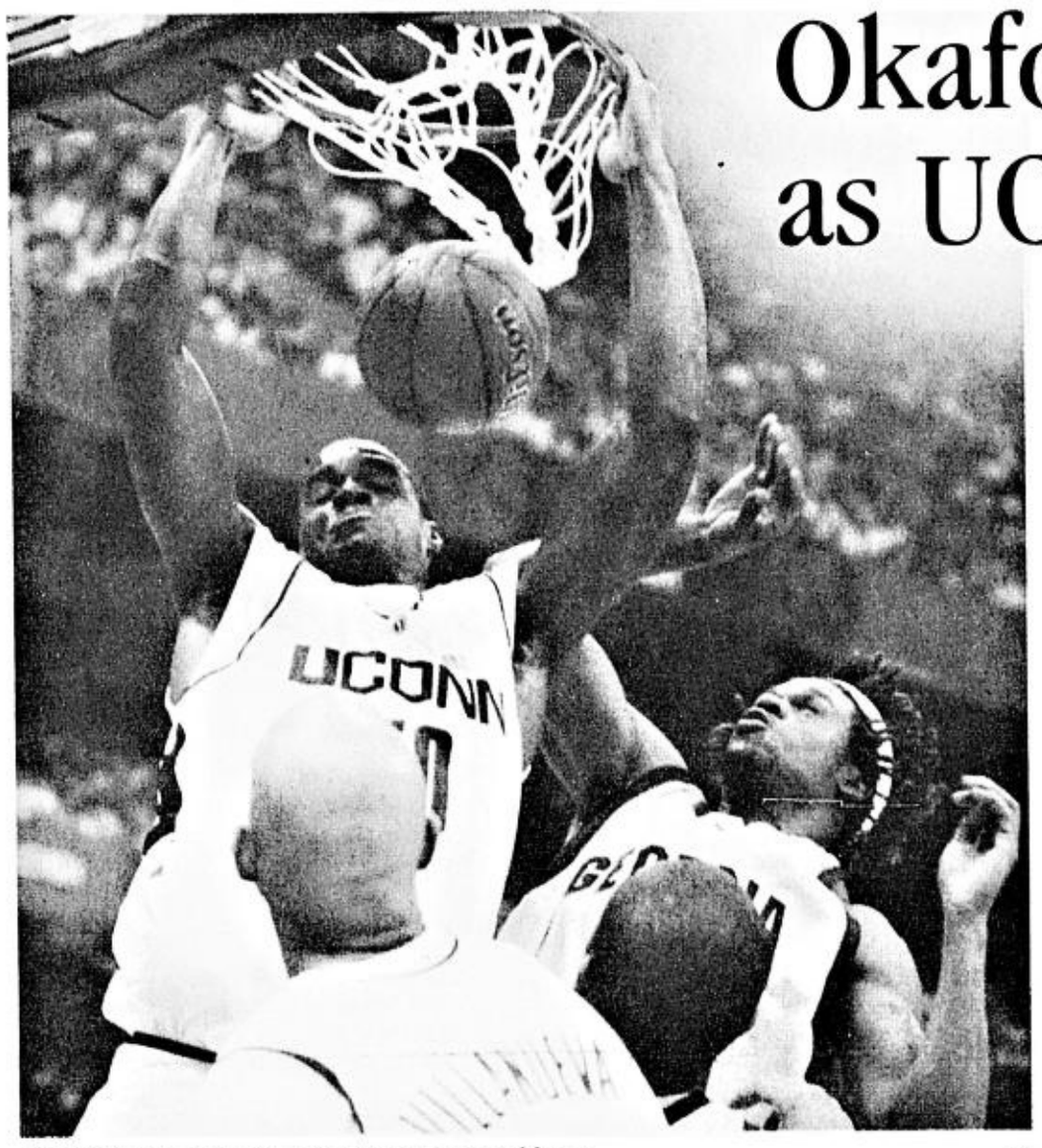
SUNKIST 69—Compton 18, Patrimonio 13, Santos 9, Coronel 7, Capati 7, Vizcarra 5, Luanzon 4, Latoreno 4, Paterno 2, Hubalde 0.

HAPEE 66—Macapagal 23, Mercado 11, Juntilla 10, Moore 7, Oreta 6, Napa 5, Tan 2, Dy 2, Mendoza 0, Dualan 0.

Quarters: 18-16, 35-35, 58-50, 69-66

RONALD Capati of Sunkist (right) and Francis Mercado of Hapee prepare for a rebound battle. RUDY ESPERAS

Okafor, Gordon star as UConn takes title



OKAFOR dunks over Georgia Tech's Clarence Moore. AP

SAN ANTONIO, Texas—Emeka Okafor notched 24 points and 15 rebounds and Ben Gordon had 21 points to help Connecticut defeat Georgia Tech, 82-73, Monday to claim its second NCAA championship since 1999.

Okafor scored five points during a 9-3 run to open the second half as Connecticut (33-6) increased a 15-point halftime lead to 50-29 with under 17 minutes left in the game.

Georgia Tech, seeking the first basketball championship in its history, never got closer than seven points the rest of the way.

"I just kept telling myself that I won't be denied and I would not let my team lose no matter what," Gordon told reporters. "This feels just incredible."

Okafor hit 10 of 17 shots and was named the Final Four's Most Outstanding Player.

Georgia Tech (28-10) was led in scoring by Will Bynum's 17 points and BJ Elder's 14. Elder hit four of 15 shots as the Yellow Jackets landed only 27 of 71 shots (38 percent) from the floor.

"They pretty much outplayed us in every phase of the game," said Georgia Tech guard Jarrett Jack. "They came out hard and we dug ourselves a big hole in the first half.

Jack had been outstanding in the tournament but hit only one of eight shots in the final. He said his team's offensive output was "disappointing." *Reuters*

Utah gains

NEW YORK—Gordan Giricek scored 25 points and Andrei Kirilenko added 17 points and 11 rebounds to power the Utah Jazz to a 92-81 win over the Memphis Grizzlies in the only NBA game played Monday. The victory moved the host Jazz (41-37) into sole possession of eighth place in the Western Conference standings, one half game ahead of the Denver Nuggets and a full game ahead of the Portland Trail Blazers in the torrid playoff race. *Reuters*

Korean expats shine in E. Ridge tourney

KOREAN expats Choi Jae-hoon and Yoo Choon-sik dominated the top divisions in the qualifying rounds for the inaugural club championships of the Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club in Gen. Trias, Cavite, over the weekend.

With the conditions made even tougher by the sweltering heat, Choi shot a respectable 78 and Yoo fired a 79 at the Faldo course to tow the eight qualifiers in Class A and Class B, respectively, into the match play rounds starting this week.

The other division topnotchers were Benito Cheng with his 93 in Class C, Reynaldo Villafuerte with a 104 in Class D, Rene Silverio with an 89 in seniors play and Eden Sasaki with a 94 in the ladies category.

Nobody won the P100,000 prize staked for a hole-in-one donated by CICI General Insurance Corp. through its CEO and president, Edwin Celino.

Qualifiers will have the next 10 days to play their round-of-eight and semifinal matches before the finals are played on April 17.

The qualifiers:

Class A—78 Choi Jae-hoon, 79 Kim Hyun-jun, 80 Yoon Kun-ro, 83 Fujio Goto, 83 Manfred Guangco, Oh Kwang-taek, 84 Lee Tong-hwa, 86 Roberto Rosales; Class B—79 Yoo Choon-sik, 79 Pio Villacorta, 89 Won Song-hi, 90 Roberto Castro, 90 Arnaldo Bautista, 91 Raphael Juan, 92 JB Torres, 94 Alex Estabillo; Class C—93 Benito Cheng, 98 Eli Escolar, 98 Deogracias Tad-y, 99 Mariano Mallari, 101 Johnny Yu, 101 Wen Yue-gang, 101 Lowell Linsey, 102 Rolan Ramos; Class D—104 Reynaldo Villafuerte, 106 Edgardo Endrino, 111 Tommy Uyliapco, 114 Edwin Celino, 115 Roberto Arbis, 115 Benito Ong, 120 Roberto Muyot, 126 Eusebio Lu; Seniors—89 Rene Silverio, 90 Benjamin del Rosario, 90 Antonio Castro, 90

Guidicelli wins twice

CARMONA, CAVITE—Team CRG-Cebu's Matteo Guidicelli posted a rare double victory by beating tough rivals in both the Formula Rotax Juniors and the premiere Open class Sunday in the Shell Karting Superseries at the Carmona Circuit Philippines.

The 14-year-old Guidicelli swept all three races of the Formula Rotax Juniors against Birel-A3 Motorsports' Marlon Stockinger and M&M Racing's Mark Bumgarner for his first win in this event sponsored by Pilipinas Shell, Bridgestone, Aviva Insurance, Eastway Motorcycle Racing and Denso Iridium Power.

Later, he survived the tough encounter with first leg winner and Birel-A3 Motorsports ace karter Allan Uy to rule the Open Class.

The event is sanctioned by the Automobile Association of the Philippines.

PACQUIAO RIVAL

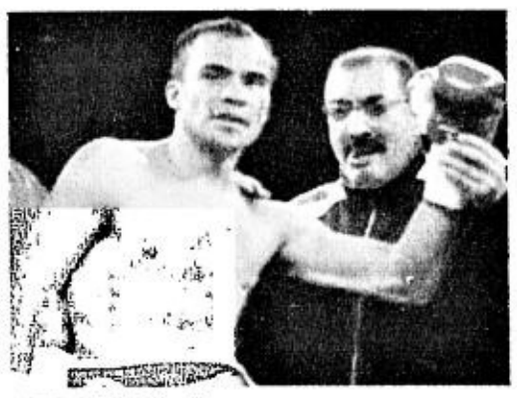
Marquez in deep training

By Salven L. Lagumbay
Contributor

WORLD Boxing Association and International Boxing Federation featherweight monarch Juan Manuel "Dinamita" Marquez is feeling "very strong" in training camp as he girds for the biggest battle of his life on May 8 against Ring Magazine featherweight king Manny Pacquiao at the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino.

Marquez (42-2, 33 KO's) has been training at the Volcan Nevado de Toluca, some 12,800 feet above sea level where he runs eight kilometers in the morning and works out at an improvised gym in the area.

After his morning runs, he goes back to the Romanza Gym in Mexico City where he trains alongside Melchor Cob Castro under trainer Ignacio "Nacho" Beristain. Castro is a southpaw Mexican who will challenge compatriot Jorge Arce for the WBC 108-lbs title on April 24 in Chiapas, Mexico.



MARQUEZ: Feeling very strong

"I don't think Pacquiao (38-2-1, 30 KO's) will make true his words of exchanging blows with Marquez starting in the opening rounds, as he has said in several occasions, but definitely this fight will be a showcase of their technical skills," said Beristain through an interpreter in an interview with media from Mexico.

"Pacquiao is a left-handed boxer, with excellent and strong technical resources, but Marquez believes in himself and he knows what's in front of him and will be more than ready. I have full confidence in Juan Manuel," Beristain, who also trained two legends in Ricardo Lopez and Julio Cesar Chavez, said.

Two additional sparmates are scheduled to arrive anytime this week in Mexico to help Marquez prepare for Pacquiao. One will come from Colombia, while the other one will be an American.

LOW gross champions Escaño (left) and Rosal, the guest partner, take centerstage with Manila Southwoods chair Bob Sobrepeña.

Domingo-Abad tops Southwoods Invt'l

MEMBER Gil Domingo already played well enough but his guest partner Lito Abad did even better for an explosive team up that led them to victory in the biggest-ever staging of the Southwoods Invitational member-guest golf tournament, which offered more than P5 million in prizes.

Domingo, a 12-handicapper, turned in net rounds of 65-69 and Abad, carrying a handicap of 17, posted 63-67 at the Legends and Masters courses of Manila Southwoods for a 24-under-par total of 264 to top the record field of 288 teams.

They beat the duo of Johnny Violeta and Armie Brizuela who wound up three strokes back at 267 in the overall rankings. They settled for the Class B plum, which they took in runaway fashion despite the sizzling form of Hanson So Sr., an 11-handicapper scoring gross rounds of 76-75, and his teammate Robert Buehs.

Banker Abe Rosal, the former national player playing as guest of Thirdy Escaño, captured his second straight member-guest low gross plum after both won with a 303 aggregate. Rosal—fresh from a record 64 at Sta. Elena last week—scored 72-75 and Escaño 74-82.

Of the multimillion worth of prizes raffled off during the awards ceremony capped by a fireworks display, Buddy Cabrera drove home the jackpot, which was a Mitsubishi Lancer GLS automatic provided by one of the event's main sponsors, Mitsubishi Motors/Diamond Motors.

The other major backers are Globe Platinum, Thai Airways, Royal Caribbean International, Northwest Airlines, Wilson Sports, Samsung, Lucerne and American Eye Center are the hole-in-one sponsors.

The hole sponsors are TM Shipping, Saud Beach Resort, Evergreen, Miramar Tuna Belly, Britesmile, Nestle, Vein Care Clinic, Pink Patio Resort Boracay, Figaro, Hotshots, Camp John Hay Dev't Co., Philippine Wine Merchant, Club Leisure Management Corp., Splash Island, Oakley, Caramba, Starmaker and Boysen.

Bringing home the other winners' trophies were Sevi Liao and his longtime partner Elphege Wong in Class A (0-9 handicap), Manuel Ozamiz-Vudjie Resurreccion in Class C (16-21) and Willy Kho-Damasus Wong in Class D (22-27).

Liao and Wong combined for 282 to finish seven up on Larry Tojino-Manoling Chan, Ozamiz-Resurreccion tallied 270 for a three-shot win over Francis Celones-Lyn Mangulabnan and Kho-Wong routed Ramon Caballero-Jun Pecana by 10 with their 278 aggregate.

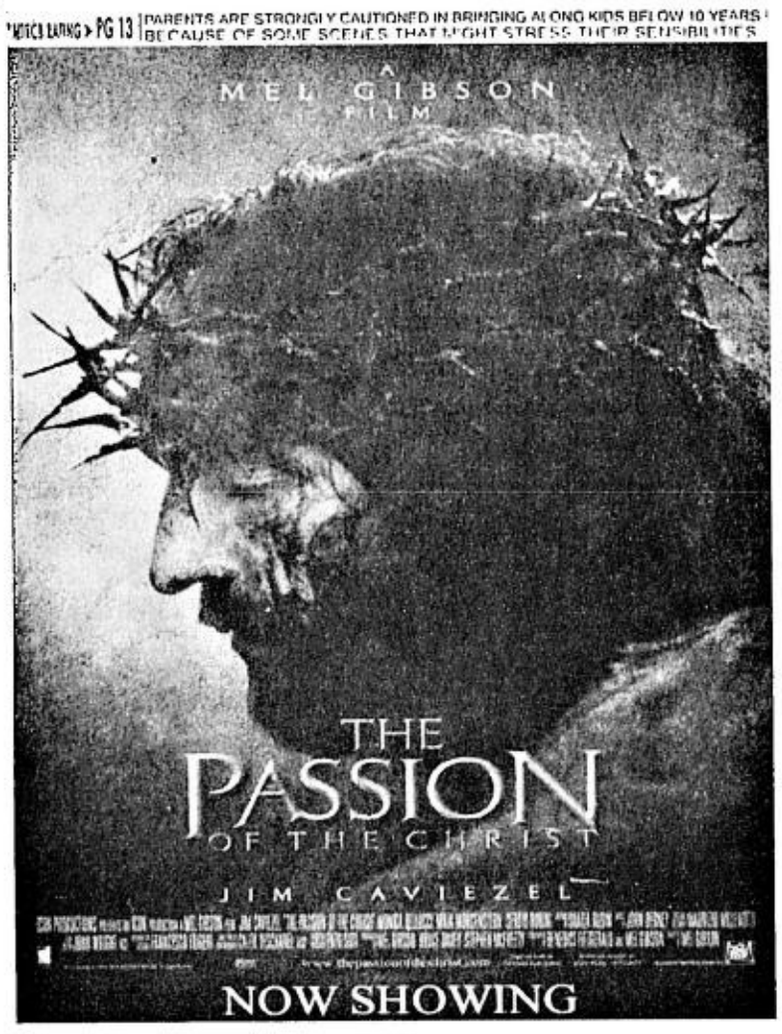
At the end of a fun-filled Invitational, Manila Southwoods chair of the board Bob Sobrepeña took note of how the event has grown to such magnitude of 576 players compared to just 70 when it started back in 1992.

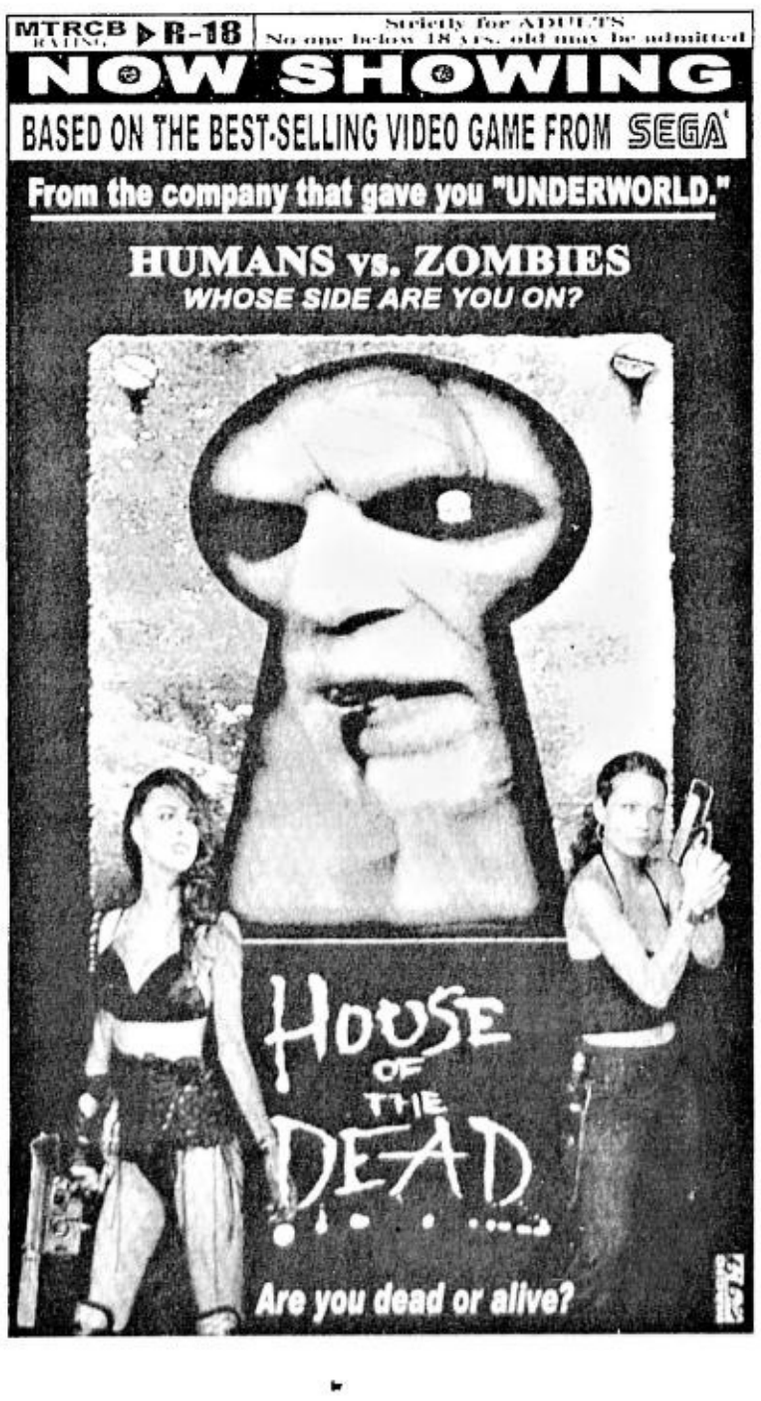
"We had such a great lineup of sponsors and we can't go wrong if our members keep on supporting our Invitational and the rest of our tournament series for that matter," said Sobrepeña as he lauded the efforts of the sports and games committee, headed by Freddie Mendoza, for the smooth organization of the tourney.

NCFP changes headquarters

THE NATIONAL Chess Federation of the Philippines has moved its headquarters to the office of executive director Casto Abundo at 517 Midland Plaza, M. Adriatico St., Ermita, Manila, with tel. 5268844, tel/fax 5304269 and email abundo@fide.com. This was decided in a board resolution which made secretary general lawyer Sammy Estimo take a leave of absence while an audit and investigation is being conducted on alleged mismanagement of NCFP funds.

MOVIE RATING > PG 13 | PARENTS ARE STRONGLY CAUTIONED IN BRINGING ALONG KIDS BELOW 10 YEARS BECAUSE OF SOME SCENES THAT MIGHT STRESS THEIR SENSIBILITIES





Bonds hits 659th homerun

HOUSTON—Barry Bonds hit his 659th home run, moving within one of Willie Mays for third place on the career list and helping the San Francisco Giants rally for a 5-4 victory over the Houston Astros. Bonds lined a first-pitch fastball from Roy Oswalt in the eighth inning Monday for a three-run shot that tied it at 4. *AP*

SPORTSWATCH

Team Regatta rules badminton tilt

TEAM Regatta beat Whistlestop in the race for the overall crown and captured the Pioneer Badminton Summer Tournament title recently at the Pioneer Badminton Club in Mandaluyong City. Skippered by Jeff Ramon, Team Regatta accumulated 205 points in 39 categories as it bested three other teams in the two-day tournament sponsored by Epson, Discovery Spa, Yehey.com, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Sunrise Hotel, Whistlestop, Regatta and PBNet. Whistlestop placed second after garnering a total of 178 points. Team Epson wound up third with 160 points while Pioneer gathered 141 points. Pioneer Badminton Club's Edmin Tarriela said the participants were treated by the organizers to a dinner party during the awarding ceremonies at Whistlestop Libis. Tarriela also announced the beginning of the Epson Summer Badminton Camp on April 12-May 3 for the first batch and May 10-May 31 for the second batch. Camp participants will go through 10 training sessions under the tutelage of former RP team players Eg Lim, Malvin Alcala and Steven Yan. Interested parties may call 746-0828 or 638-5343.

Baguio, C. de Oro joining NBC meet

THE BAGUIO City Cardinals have confirmed their participation in the Panasonic Cup Iloilo invitational basketball tournament on May 5-8 while Cagayan de Oro will figure in a four-game series with Spring Cooking Oil-San Pablo in three different southern venues. The Cardinals will go up against teams from Iloilo, Cebu and Pampanga in the cagefest hosted by Iloilo Basketball League president Robert Uy as part of the miniseries preceding the start of the National Basketball Conference's national championship on May 22 in Baguio City and May 23 in Cagayan de Oro. The CdO hoopsters of Gov. Antonio Calingin and his son Andy will play the Panasonic Cup 7 Lakas champion Spring Cooking Oil-SP of shooting king Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla and Mayor Florante "Boy" Aquino in Cagayan de Oro, Valencia City and Misamis Oriental. Owned by Leonides "Des" Bautista and managed by Nick Parado, the Cardinals and the CdO squad are also among the teams seeing action in the tourney.

SM Megamall to host sport-climbing

IT WILL be SM Megamall's turn to host the fast-growing sport of indoor sport-climbing starting April 12 with a combined clinic, fun and open competition. Following a successful launch of its SM Summer Sports at the Mall program last weekend at SM Sucat, which attracted over a hundred beginners, the four-day event will be held at the atrium of Building A, the first two days for the clinic and fun competitions, the next two days for free trials and open competition. Capping off the two-day clinic will be Victorinox's "Be Ready," a test of climbing skills, sponsored by Victorinox Original Swiss Army knives with winners receiving prizes from the sponsors. Power Up's Joey Cuerdo said the event is also backed by SM Super Malls, Globe Telecom and JVC. Registration for the Pump Fest begins at 1 p.m. on April 14 while the competition begins at 3 p.m. For more details, contact Power Up Quezon City at 032-7273, Pasig at 631-4675, Parañaque at 852-9970 and Alabang at 809-4050 and 809-4065.

Las Piñas derby scheduled today

THE ONLY derby scheduled in Metro Manila today is set at the air-conditioned Las Piñas Coliseum, the "3-Cock Giveaway Derby," featuring more than 50 matches to be sponsored by Sagupaan Complexor 3000. LPC manager Alex Tobias, derby host, said that each champion will receive an additional prize of P8,000 aside from the champion's prize. Entry fee is only P4,400. Interested parties may submit entries until 2 p.m. today. For inquiries, contact 873-1040 or 09205609404 (look for Gerry or Julius). The 3-cock derby promotion of Larry Barbasa, Lando Gujlde and Totong 515 Group sizzles on April 14. On April 21 is another 3-cocker with Julius Canumay as host. Meanwhile, regular hackfights at LPC are set from Monday to Sunday. A total of 348 fights were held last week.

PATAKBONG PINOY. Champion Martin Coronel and runner-up finishers Roel Logronio and Crispin Fuasa show their medals as they pose with barangay officials led by Nelson Cundangan following the Beam-Zest-O Patakbong Pinoy staged by the Media Runners and Sports Promotions recently at Barangay Sumilang in Pasig City. The race will back the Araw ng Kagitingan ultramarathon set April 14 that traces the Death March trail from Bataan to Tarlac.

Summer activities get youth into sports

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

SUMMER is here. It is the time of the year when students are on vacation and various youth-oriented activities such as basketball, swimming, chess and badminton are listed in the sports menu.

Among these summer activities, the most popular are the pioneer Milo Best Center Basketball Clinic (March, April, May, tels. 411-6260/372-3066 in Metro Manila and (044) 711-2481 and 933-1214 in Marilao, Bulacan), Burlington Basketball Skills Camp with Norman Black (April 12, tel. 894-3014), Samboy Lim Skywalker Camp (April-May, tel. 531-7554), Selecta Moo-S.H.O.T.S. with Norman Black and Alex Compton (April 19-May 13, tel. 631-8101 loc. 7621 and 631-8101 loc. 7155), Growee-Hoops School with Bobby Parks and Charlie Favis (April, tels. 687-4364 and 688-0167) and National Basketball Training Center (April 12, tel. 628-6520).

In swimming, there is the Fil-Estate Foundation-Tuding Lozada Clinic at the Manila Southwoods Golf and Country Club in Carmona, Cavite (tels. 805-2780, 0917-08436954 Tuding Lozada) and 637-0100 loc. 7020, ask for Jerry Tripulca).

In chess, there is the widely followed Checkmate. Organized by Mila Emperado in 1990. It produced many young luminaries headed by Mark Paragua, now rated as the country's No. 1 player by the World Chess Federation (Fide). For more details about Checkmate, call Ms. Emperado at 0916-8521069 or 826-8560.

On the other hand, the flourishing sport of badminton will not be resting on its laurel. It will be conducting a summer clinic on April 12 at the Sheridan Badminton Center in Mandaluyong, tel 633-8401. Tennis is also joining the bandwagon with a three-month session ending on May 26 at the Manila Southwoods Tennis Courts in Carmona, Cavite; and the Bramante Tennis Courts, Renaissance Towers on Ortigas Ave., Pasig City under the aegis of the Fil-Estate Sports Foundation and Manny Tecson Summer Tennis camp.

Also on tap are the Milo Power-Up Sports Climbing Clinic on April-May, tels. 923-7273 (Quezon City); 631-4675 (Pasig) and 852-9970 (Parañaque); the National Archery Association of the Philippines Archery Clinic on April 12-May 27 at the Manila Polo Club, tel. 525-6674; and martial arts summer lessons at the YMCA of Makati on April 12, tel. 895-9525.

Among these summer clinics, the multi-awarded Milo Best Center is regarded as the oldest, having been in the business for more than 20 years. It is the first in the country to teach the basics of the game through a scientific and systematized approach. Among its products are Perry Ronquillo, 1998 and 1999 PBA Coach of the Year; former PBA Most Valuable Player Benjie Paras, PBA Sportsmanship awardee and defense specialist Jerry Codiñera, 1993 PBA Rookie of the Year Zandro Limpot; 1994 PBA Rookie of the Year Boybits Victoria; PBA players Paolo Mendoza, Rey Evangelista, Patrick Fran, Gerry Esplana and Poch Juinio.

Mainly because of its proven success and more importantly, because of its laudable objective, another Milo Best Center clinic will be held on May 17-22 at the Dr. Nicanor Guillermo Memorial Multi-Purpose Complex at the Constantino subdivision in Marilao, Bulacan.

"As we embark on another year, we are confident of getting the kids into sports and keeping them away from drugs and other vices," said chief organizer Pancho Manalad.

During the weeklong sessions, which is supported by three-term Mayor Leoncio "Nonoy" Duran and his daughter, Berna Duran-Velasco, the young participants are taught to respect their elders and obey their coaches, a priceless lesson they will carry through to their adult life. And, best of all, children and their proud parents will share many quality time together in a wholesome family affair.

***

KEY APO PASSES HIS BIGGEST TEST. Owned and bred in Australia four years ago by Marho president Aristeo "Putch" Puyat, coal-black colt Key Apo passed his biggest test thus far, winning his fourth Philippine race at the Santa Ana Park on Sunday by outclassing battle-tested Neat Laurel in the opening leg of the Philracom Imported Horses Championship series.

"But he still needs seasong," Puyat said after his prized import, ridden by jockey Antonio Alcasid Jr., won the 1400-meter race, clocking 1:31.9 for the distance. The heavy favorite, Key Apo (Perugino out of Affetee) lived up to expectations, crossing the wire a full length ahead of his nearest rival.

"Pretty soon, Key Apo would be ready for the big-time," said regular trainer Johnny Sordan, one of the best in the industry.

Special PROJECT

Lakbay Alalay

E-mail: sprojects@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Aries Espinosa

Your partner in safe travel

By Marlet D. Salazar

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Accidents do happen, and this is where Lakbay Alalay is most concerned about in establishing the program. Thus, foremost on their list is giving medical assistance to injured motorists with the help of the Philippine National Red Cross, which has also been a major partner for so long now.

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From there, they would still monitor the situation and condition of the injured and if necessary locate their families or relatives. This is also where the service of communications comes. Petron Corp partnered with telecommunications giant Globe Telecom. Also joining the project in this service is Nextel, which helps connecting roving volunteer operatives to the base camps.

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2. Never leave children or animals locked in a closed car even for a brief moment. In the summer, a car's interior temperature can rise within 15 minutes and this may be dangerous for your passengers.

3. Make a stop at a Petron Express Center and let you and your family avail themselves of its conveniences. You need not leave your children in the car when making stopovers for food or even just to relieve yourself because you and your family can benefit from its conveniences.

4. Have your car checked at a Petron Mega Service Station anytime during the entire long trip. Traveling can be both a boon and a bane and making that short stop to have a car check can help you avoid the risks of sudden car breakage or over-heating. Through Petron's lakbay Alalay program, Petron volunteers conduct free preventive maintenance checks on tire pressure, radiators, battery, window washer, lights, engine oil and brake fluids, all for free.

5. Pack personal medicines, duplicate prescriptions and your First Aid Kit. These necessary reliables are your best bet in case you feel indisposed during the entire length of the trip.

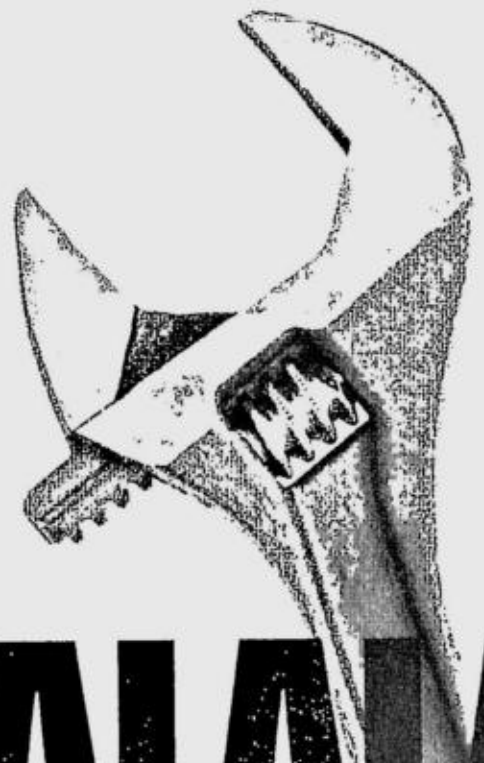
6. Make sure that a proof of your car insurance and car registration are in your car's glove compartment. In case of unwanted accidents, these documents (or at least proof of them) come in handy.

7. Bring a duplicate set of car keys in your wallet. In case you accidentally lock your car, your duplicate key can open it for you. Imagine the time and energy you waste if a spare key is unavailable. You may be left with two options, take the bus back to your house or break the car's locking system. Both of these spell trouble for your trip.

8. Always have enough to munch in the car for that long trip ahead. You can never be sure if there'd be traffic jams and road blocks to keep you from getting to your destination on time. Drop by at Petron Treats and grab a bite—be it donuts or snacks, coffee or soda, biscuits or cookies.

9. Constantly check traffic situations on the highway on your cell phone by texting LAKBAY to 2600 for Smart/Talk N'Text/Addict and 2363 for Globe/Touch Mobile. These relieve you of the hassle of passing heavy traffic roads and instead, find alternative routes to make your trip fast and easy.

Following these simple and easy tips will make traveling with your family truly the most pleasurable one you've been pining for.



LAKBAY | ALALAY

WE'VE SENT OUR MECHANICS PACKING.

From April 7 to 11, 2004, count on our employee volunteers and partners to help you out on your motoring concerns. Lakbay Alalay is ready to provide you with medical assistance, towing services, basic car parts, fuels and lubricants, drinking water, clean restrooms and phones for emergency calls. After all, we've been part of your trip for 18 years.

PETRON LAKBAY ALALAY 2004
Your Friend on the Road

For more details on Lakbay Alalay 2004 and expressway traffic updates, visit www.lakbayalalay.com or text LAKBAY to 2600 for Smart/Talk N' Text/Addict Mobile subscribers or 2363 for Globe/Touch Mobile subscribers.

Petron-McDonald's Drive-Thru Promo: For every P100 fuel purchase at Petron stations nationwide, get a McDonald's discount coupon worth P15.00 off on a Big Mac, Quarter Pounder or 2-pc Chicken McDo w/ rice at the nearest McDonald's drive thru outlet. From March 15 to April 15, 2004 only. Coupons are valid until June 15, 2004. Per DTI-NCR Permit # 1042 Series of 2004.

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BEST COPY AVAILABLE

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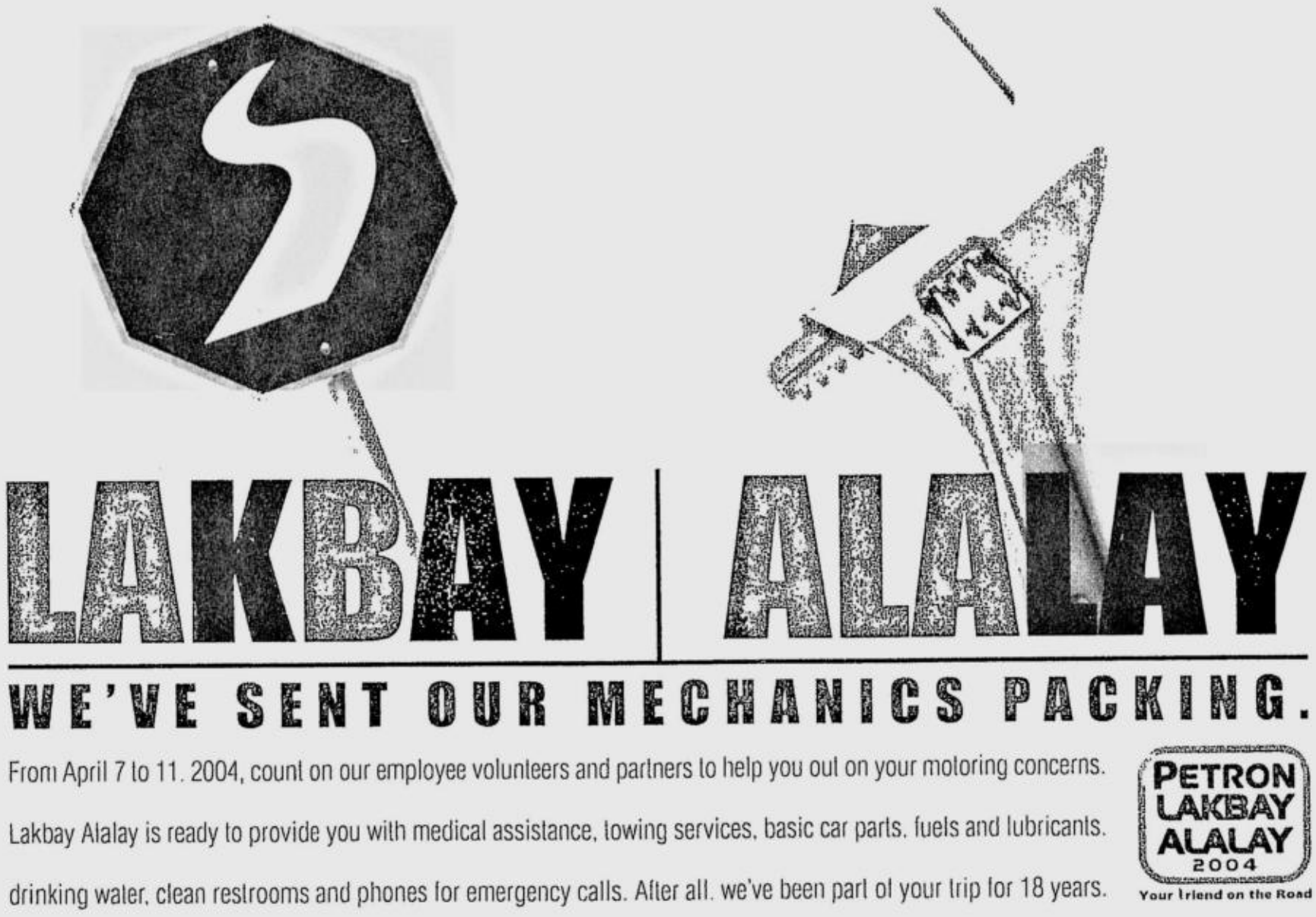
6. Make sure that a proof of your car insurance and car registration are in your car's glove compartment. In case of unwanted accidents, these documents (or at least proof of them) come in handy.

7. Bring a duplicate set of car keys in your wallet. In case you accidentally lock your car, your duplicate key can open it for you. Imagine the time and energy you waste if a spare key is unavailable. You may be left with two options, take the bus back to your house or break the car's locking system. Both of these spell trouble for your trip.

8. Always have enough to munch in the car for that long trip ahead. You can never be sure if there'd be traffic jams and road blocks to keep you from getting to your destination on time. Drop by at Petron Treats and grab a bite—be it donuts, snacks, coffee or soda, biscuits or cookies.

9. Constantly check traffic situations on the highway on your cell phone by texting LAKBAY to 2600 for Smart/Talk N' Text/Addict and 2363 for Globe/Touch Mobile. These relieve you of the hassle of passing heavy traffic roads and instead, find alternative routes to make your trip fast and easy.

Following these simple and easy tips will make traveling with your family truly the most pleasurable one you've been pining for.



For more details on Lakbay Alalay 2004 and expressway traffic updates, visit www.lakbayalalay.com or text LAKBAY to 2600 for Smart/Talk N' Text/Addict Mobile subscribers or 2363 for Globe/Touch Mobile subscribers.

Petron-McDonald's Drive-Thru Promo For every P100 fuel purchase at Petron stations nationwide, get a McDonald's discount coupon worth P15.00 off on a Big Mac, Quarter Pounder or 2-pc Chicken McDo w/ rice at the nearest McDonald's drive thru outlet from March 15 to April 15, 2004 only. Coupons are valid until June 15, 2004. Per DTI-NCR Permit # 1042 Series of 2004.

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NISSAN PATROL:

Loaded with safety amenities

The Patrol can smoothly make those curbs and turns without fear, with its power signal mirrors with red light indicators ensuring maximum visibility to other motorists on the road

THE ULTIMATE status symbol for majority of politicians, CEOs and the most fastidious among the elite—the Nissan Patrol, is a handsome wagon packed with a host of safety amenities under its hood.

Usually accorded with a red-carpet treatment on the roads of Metro Manila and a VIP space at the most exclusive of venues, the Patrol, though luxuriously designed from top to bottom, is one tough vehicle that would not shy away from the challenges of a long-haul drive, the most extreme of terrain and the most unpredictable of weather conditions.

Come hell or high water, the Nissan Patrol is a rock solid performer when it concerns the safety of its driver and occupants.

The Different Scenarios

Tested in different real-world conditions, the Patrol has conquered every terrain with superior performance. Its on-road and off-road capabilities have stamped power into the Patrol brand.

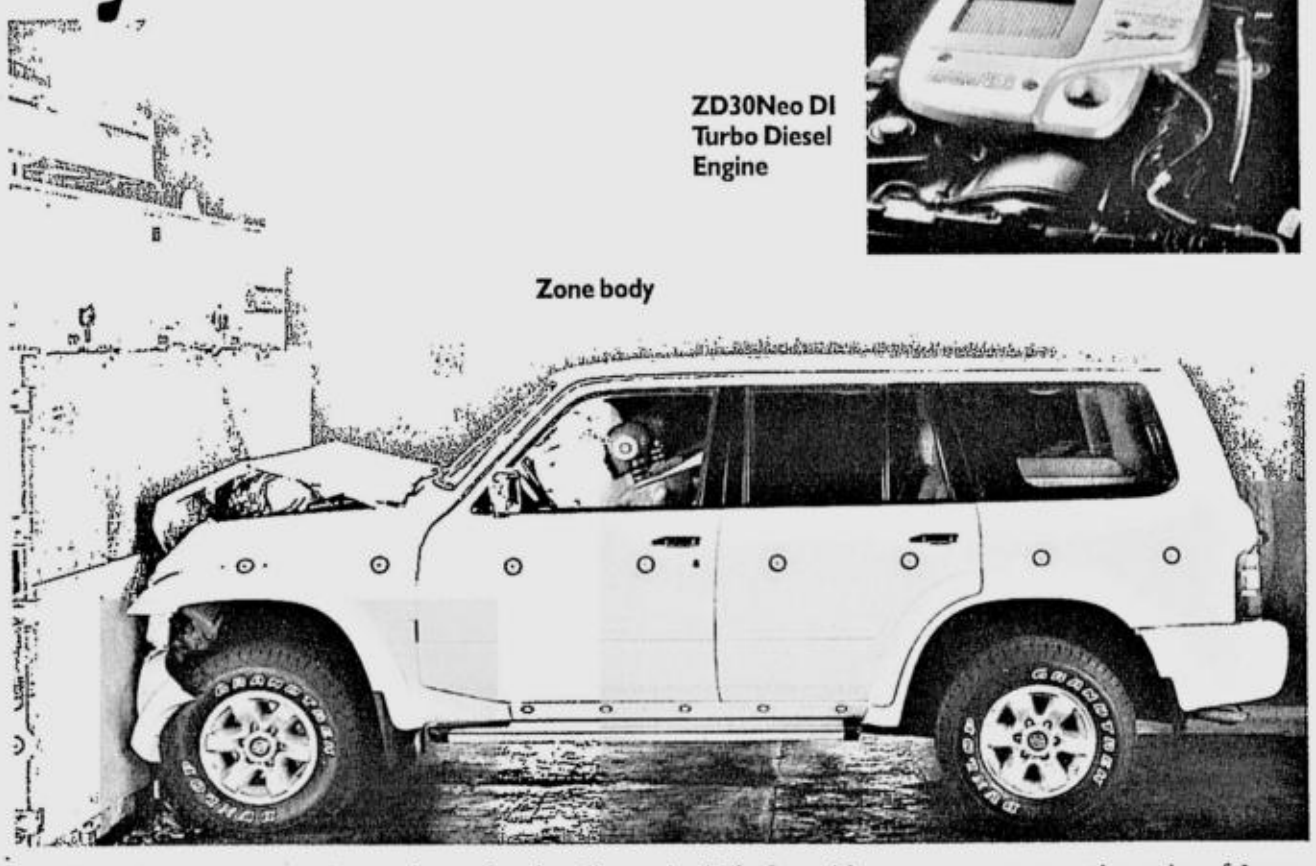
A litmus test to the Patrol's safety features is the various road scenarios in the country where drivers have to rely heavily on the strength of their vehicles for a safe journey.

Conquer the Northern lahar country or the mountainous provinces of the South with domination. The Patrol is ready to bump and grind through all kinds of sands, cobblestones and mud, move with ease and hurdle those obstacles as this tough carrier has a rigid axle, a coil spring suspension system with 3 links in front and 5 in the rear area, ensuring extreme durability and providing greater traction. The Nissan Patrol can handle the roughest landscape wherever.

Undaunted by flood waters, the Patrol can brave up to 700mm wading depth, ensuring comfort and security to passengers even at the onset of the monsoon season.

Now available in a 4x4 model that further elevates its performance, the new Nissan Patrol part-time four wheel drive feature with automatic locking hubs permits hassle-free shifting from 2-wheel drive to 4-wheel drive as the driver sees fit. Its capacity provides the option of greater traction and handling.

From strength to strength, the Patrol's sturdy lateral frame offers superlative protection in case of collisions. Designed with the Nissan revolutionary Zone Body Concept, this vehicle has shock absorbing crash safety zones that are built-in to diffuse the force of an impact. It also has side door guard beams providing extra-invulnerability.



ZD30Neo DI Turbo Diesel Engine

Zone body

Whether in the metropolis or in remote highways, the Patrol is prepared to handle untoward collision as the unit is equipped with an SRS airbag ready to be deployed in the event of a head-on impact. Three points retractable seatbelts were also fitted from front row to rear row for additional security and peace of mind.

Other Amenities

The Patrol can smoothly make those curbs and turns without fear, with its power signal mirrors with red light indicators ensuring maximum visibility to other motorists on the road.

Meanwhile, an added safety feature loaded in the Patrol is the NATS, an automotive parlance for the Nissan Anti-Theft System. Picture this: your valuable Patrol parks unguarded. And some hooligans await to make an unwanted entrance using a bogus key. Can they or can't they? The NATS help to protect your luxurious vehicle by disabling the engine when an uncoded key is used.

Another safety amenity of the Patrol is the anti-squeeze power windows laced with sensors that prevent accidental wring or pinch, avoiding injury to passengers when the windows are unintentionally closed.

Power Engines

At the core of the Patrol's power is the ZD30Neo Turbo Diesel Engine, awarded with an energy conservation prize of Japan. This technology employs the Nissan M-Fire combustion system which enhances fuel efficiency while reducing exhaust emission and engine noise.

The Patrol is also available in a 4.5L TB45E Engine, a gasoline powered model that boasts of the Nissan ECCS (Electronic Concentrated Engine Control System) for a highly precise fuel injection. Both engines provide sufficient power and torque for high-speed driving and uphill climbing.

Definitely a brute in a suit, the Nissan Patrol, exclusively assembled and distributed by Universal Motors Corporation, is a "Neo" warrior on the road for all the safety amenities it offers.

Universal, Royce Motors conduct road assistance in Baguio

ROAD trips should never be a hassle— especially over the holidays when everything is supposed to be laid back and free from stress. Apart from thinking about the details of the trip and braving the crowd of fellow vacationers, every minute of the time should be spent by simply enjoying the holiday.

To guarantee a hassle-free summer holiday to all its valued clientele, Universal Motors Corp, in partnership with its dealer Royce Motor Center Inc, is holding a Summer Motorists Assistance Service Program at the most frequented summer destination in the country, Baguio City.

Free service road assistance and vehicle maintenance check-ups are offered to all proud owners of Nissan Light Commercial and Recreational Vehicles and Sport Utility Vehicles like the Nissan Frontier, Frontier Titanium, Patrol, Urvan Estate, Urvan Escapade, Urvan Shuttle and Terrano at the Caltex Station, Burnham Park in Baguio City from April 7 to 10.

So, take in the scent of pines this week and drive your Nissan LCV and SUV worry-free with this added service from Universal Motors Corp and Royce Motor Center Inc.

BEHIND THESE DOORS ARE DECIDED THE LIVES OF COMPANIES, THE FATES OF INDUSTRIES, THE COURSE OF A NATION.

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Singing tilt . . .

From page A25

main luminaries on the show biz scene, reminding everyone that youth and talent are fine, but talent and experience are truly memorable.

Let's hope that lesson will be learned locally as well, so that we don't have to make do with young stars who *try* to sing, and instead prefer the truly exceptional talents in our midst—of whatever age.

'The Bourne Identity'

HBO screens the **Matt Damon** starrer "The Bourne Identity" at 9 p.m. on April 10. Based on **Robert Ludlum's** 1980 spy thriller, the film is billed as "a thinking man's actioner."

It casts Damon as a man seemingly without a past, who is pulled out of the ocean with two bullets in his back. He attempts to put the pieces of his life back together and relies on his CIA training to avoid arrest until he can exonerate himself.

'Starsky & Hutch'

THE TITLE roles in "Starsky & Hutch" the movie are played by **Ben Stiller** and **Owen Wilson**, respectively. Their leading ladies, **Carmen Electra** and **Amy Smart**, are cast as flirtatious cheerleaders who want to have a good time and are open to new experiences.

Carmen is known as a sex symbol, but Amy is the delightful surprise in the production because she is known more as a gifted actress. In fact, in the recent psycho-drama, "The Butterfly Effect," she got better notices than **Ashton Kutcher**.

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1 PETER PAN
11:20, 1:40, 4:00
6:20, 8:40, 10:55
GP

2 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
10:30, 1:30, 4:30, 7:30, 10:30
PG-13

3 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 9:30
PG-13

4 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00
PG-13

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PASSION OF THE CHRIST
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P13

CINEMA 2
PASSION OF THE CHRIST
11:20, 2:05, 4:50, 7:35, 10:30
P13

Special screening of
PASSION OF THE CHRIST on Holy Thursday.
Advance ticket purchase for PASSION OF THE CHRIST is also available. • 722 4496
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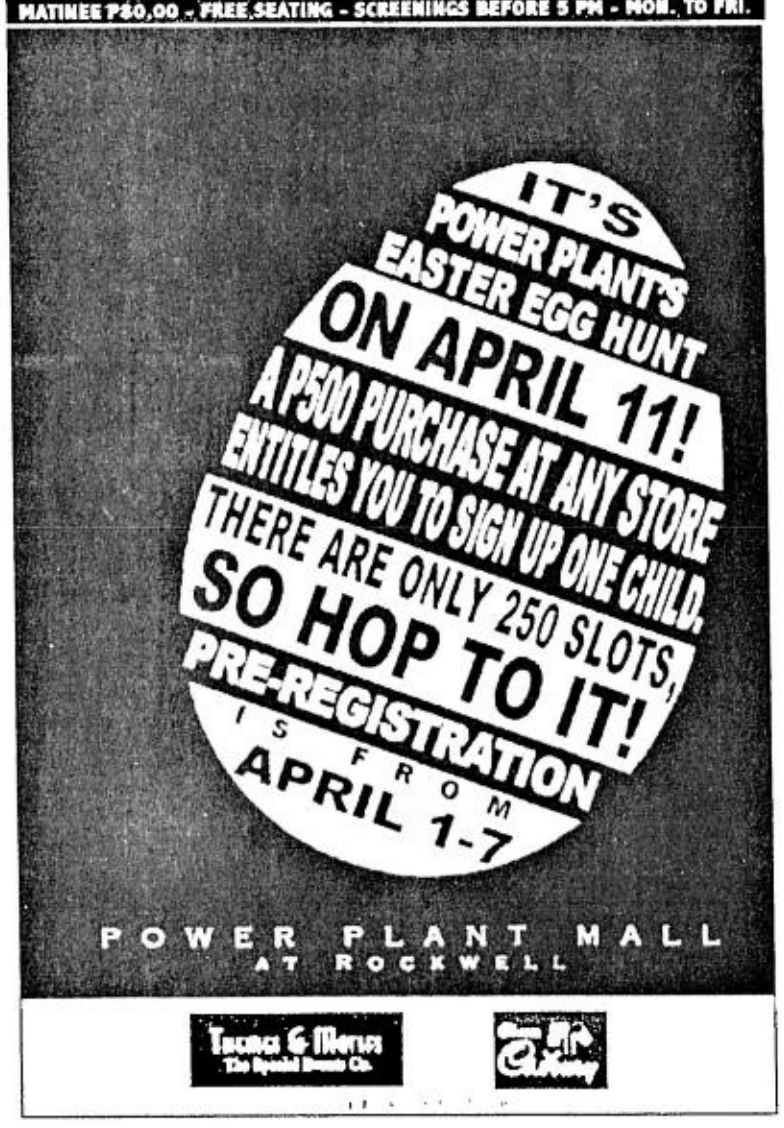
Rockwell Center, Makati City
Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST PG13 1:30, 4:10, 6:50, 9:30	PETER PAN GP 12:20, 2:45, 5:10, 7:35, 10:00	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST PG13 1:00, 3:40, 6:20, 9:00
THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST PG13 11:20, 2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST PG13 12:30, 3:10, 5:50, 8:30	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST PG13 11:50, 2:30, 5:10, 7:50, 10:30

MATINEE P80.00 - FREE SEATING - SCREENINGS BEFORE 5 PM - MON. TO FRI.



Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX

Ali 3	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
Ali 4	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
Ali 5	PETER PAN
Ali 6	HOUSE OF THE DEAD
Ali 7	OTSO OTSO

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APR 9	OLPH RETREAT (7AM)/ SHALOM (1PM)
APR 10	OLPH RETREAT (7AM)/ SHALOM (2PM)
APR 11	PBA: FED EX VS. RED BULL
APR 13	NCA 7-COCK DERBY
APR 14	PBA: PUREFOODS VS. RED BULL
APR 15	NCA 7-COCK DERBY
APR 16	REWIND PLUS DOBLE REVO DOUBLE PREMY C
APR 17	18TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LORD'S FLOCK

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THEATER MOVIE GUIDE
MANILA

EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY LEGEND OF CROCODILE

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR

NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA

A	KASIBULAN
B	CLOSED
C	

MANDALUYONG CITY

SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

CAINTA RIZAL

STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	OTSO OTSO
CINEMA-2	KARIBAL
CINEMA-3	MAGNIFICO
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	HAUNTED OFFICE
CINEMA-6	GRUDGE 2
CINEMA-7	TORQUE
CINEMA-8	HIGHWAYMEN
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	PASSION OR THE CHRIST
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
CINEMA-12	SCOOBY DOO 2
CINEMA-14	HOUSE OF THE DEAD
CINEMA-15	50 FIRST DATES

LORES

CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

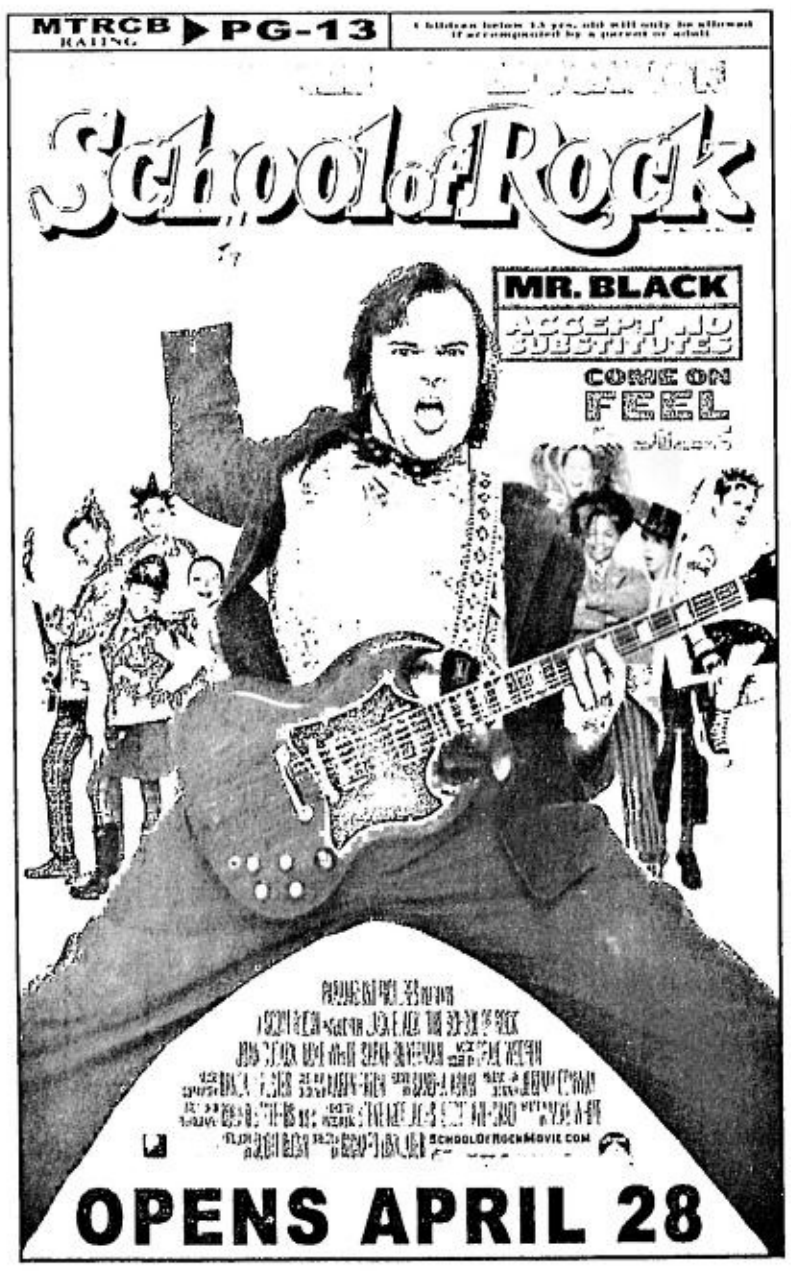
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN

(LAS PINAS)	[illegible]
CINEMA-1	OTSO OTSO
CINEMA-2	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
CINEMA 4	[illegible]

UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL

(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

MTRCB RATING PG-13
Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult



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THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
11:50, 2:30, 5:10, 7:50, 10:30

2 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 11.20, 2.00, 4.40, 7:20, 10:00	3 PETER PAN Sneak Preview 10:15, 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 9 45	4 50 FIRST DATES 11.10, 1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, 10:00
5 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 10:50, 1.30, 4.10, 6.50, 9.30	6 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 12 30, 3 20, 6.10, 9:00	7 SCOOBY DOO 2 10:50, 1:00, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, 9:40
8 LOVE ACTUALLY 10:40, 1:25, 4:10, 6:55, 9:40	9 HOUSE OF THE DEAD 10.50, 1.00, 3:10, 5:20, 7.30	10 THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT 11 10, 1.30, 3.50, 6.10, 8.30, 10 30

MATINEE: Monday to Friday/ 10 am-4pm except holidays
Matinee Price: P100 THX cinema / P80 for one level cinemas
Regular Price: P130 THX / P95/65 for two levels cinemas / P95 for one level cinemas

ERMITA 526-7185 / 536-7809 to 12

THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
11:10, 1:50, 4:30, 7:10, 10:00

2 SCOOBY DOO 2 10.15, 12.10, 2.05, 4 00, 5.55, 7 50, 9 50	3 50 FIRST DATES 10:50, 1:00, 3:10, 5.20, 7.30, 9:50	4 HOUSE OF THE DEAD 11 05, 1.10, 3:15, 5.20, 7.45, 9.40
5 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 10 30, 1:10, 3:50, 6:30, 9 20,	6 PETER PAN Sneak Preview 11.30, 2 00, 4.30, 7 00, 9.40,	7 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 10 30, 1 10, 3 50, 6 30, 9 20

Big R Supercenter METRO EAST 682-8193/99 / 682-8280

1 HOUSE OF THE DEAD 11:50, 2:10, 4:30, 6:50, 9:10
2 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 11:55, 2:35, 5:15, 7:55, 10:35

3 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 11 55, 2:35, 5:15, 7 55, 10 35	4 50 FIRST DATES 10:50, 12 50, 2 50, 4 50, 6.50, 9.00	5 SCOOBY DOO 2 10.50, 12 50, 2 50, 4:50, 6.50, 8:50
6 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 12:35, 3 15, 5:55, 8.35	7 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 12 35, 3 15, 5 55, 8 35	8 PETER PAN Sneak Preview 1:05, 3.45, 6.35, 9.05

Big R Supercenter NOVALICHES / FAIRVIEW 935-3229 / 31

1 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 10:10, 12:50, 3:30, 6:10, 8:50
2 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 10:10, 12:50, 3:30, 6:10, 8:50

3 HOUSE OF THE DEAD 12.00, 2 00, 4.00, 6 00, 8 00	4 OTSO-OTSO 11:45, 1.55, 4 05, 6.15, 8 30	5 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 11 30, 2 10, 4 50, 7:30
6 SCOOBY DOO 2 11:25, 1 15, 3 05, 4 55, 6 45, 8 35	7 50 FIRST DATES 12.00, 2:00, 4:00, 6 00, 8.10	8 PETER PAN Sneak Preview 11 20, 1:35, 3:50, 6 05, 8:30

Citisquare MALABON 288-0985/2575	big Supercenter CAINTA 240-4661	Big R Supercenter STA. ROSA Laguna (049)837-0907
1 PETER PAN Sneak Preview	1 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	1 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 OTSO-OTSO	2 OTSO-OTSO	2 THE CURSE
3 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	3 PETER PAN Sneak Preview	3 PETER PAN Sneak Preview
4 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	4 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	4 THE GRUDGE 2
		5 HIDALGO

Big R Supercenter LIPA 757-3664 / 312-5870	Big R Supercenter DASMARINAS 852-2125	Big R Supercenter STARMILLS 875-1927 / 961-5270
1 50 FIRST DATES	1 SCOOBY DOO 2	1 50 FIRST DATES
2 OTSO-OTSO	2 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	2 THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT
3 THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT	3 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	3 SCOOBY DOO 2
4 KARIBAL	4 OTSO-OTSO	4 THE NIGHTMARE
5 SCOOBY DOO 2	5 50 FIRST DATES	5 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
		6 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST

IMUS 471-8188 / 875-5858	BACOLOD 441-0458/59	ILOILO 336-8070/78
1 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	1 TORQUE	1 TORQUE
2 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	2 HIDALGO	2 GOTHIKA
3 SCOOBY DOO 2	3 LOVE ACTUALLY	3 LOVE ACTUALLY
4 HOUSE OF THE DEAD	4 GOTHIKA	4 THE NIGHTMARE
5 OTSO-OTSO	5 SCOOBY DOO 2	5 BONE SNATCHER
6 PETER PAN Sneak Preview	6 OTSO-OTSO	6 SCOOBY DOO 2

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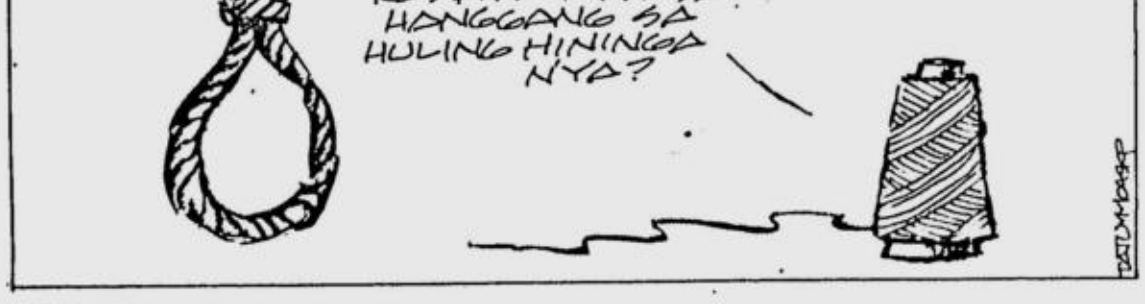


HOROSCOPE
BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're multitalented. You're enthused about everything in life. In fact, you want to do it all. You respond sensitively to the energies of others, and for this your friends are grateful to you. Given the opportunity, you can inspire people. The year ahead might be one of the best years of your life. Reach for your dreams!
Birthdate of: Russell Crowe, actor; Ravi Shankar, musician; James Garner, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): The rest of this month is a poor time to buy ground transportation (cars and trucks) or anything related to computers. Wait until April 30 to make this kind of purchase.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): If it hasn't happened already, you can expect to run into ex-partners and previous spouses. Look sharp. (Living well is the best revenge.)

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Don't be hard on yourself if you seem to be forgetting things lately. Lost keys and forgotten papers, as well as missed appointments will plague you this month.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Expect to run into all kinds of people from your past this month. They're practically coming out of the woodwork! Actually, it's a good thing: It's nice to have history with others.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): The rest of this month is a poor time to initiate new projects at work. However, it's an excellent time to finish up old business. Just roll up your sleeves.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): If you travel in the month of April, you're best off going someplace you've been to before. If you go someplace new, double-check all your plans.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You have to settle old business connected with shared property and the joint ownership of something. This applies to debt, loans, wills and inheritances.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You will definitely be dealing with old business with partners this month. You might also be dealing with partners from your past! (You can run, but you can't hide.)

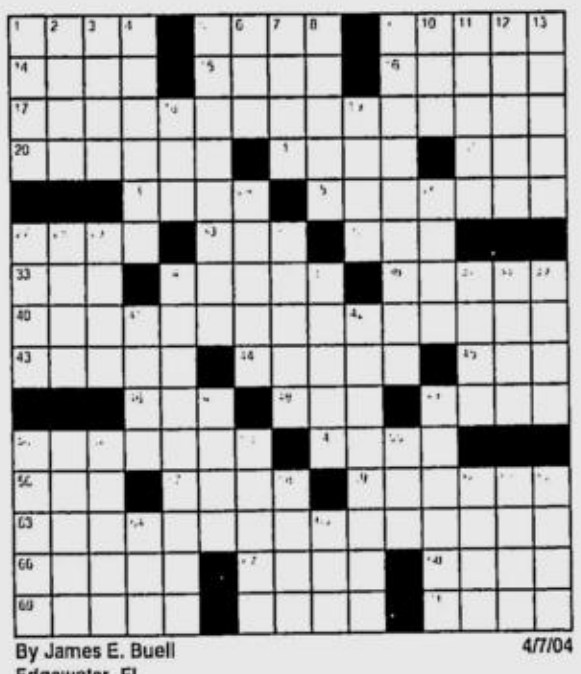
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Reality check: The month ahead will have delays, frustrations and confused communications at work. Just accept this and cope as best you can. (This will be gone by May.)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Old flames from your past surface now. This could promote a bit of jealousy, embarrassment or horror, depending on who you are. (Sometimes the past doesn't always stay there.)

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Stock the fridge. Relatives are on their way. Family reunions and visiting guests could eat you out of house and home. (Good luck.)

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Pay your phone bill. All kinds of glitches in ground transportation and your communication are likely this month. Forewarned is forearmed.

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS
1 Ran in the wash
5 Lethal weapons
9 Wet and spongy
14 Ethereal
15 Stand by
16 Pal of Kukla and Fran
17 Storm
20 Cheerless
21 Parker of "South Park"
22 "Peggy __ Got Married"
23 Cuts grass
25 Unmasks
27 Furthermore
30 Cassowary cousin
32 Bar bill
33 Concession
34 Talent broker
36 Fingerprint line
40 Discourage
43 Flight of fancy
44 Freshwater ducks
45 Protest vote
46 To the _ degree
48 Outer edge
49 Ecclesiastical court
50 Overnight flights
54 Evening in ads
56 Trinidad sprinter Boldon
57 Kampuchea's neighbor
59 Triangular insert in a garment
63 Indulge
66 Assign blame to
67 Prepare copy
68 Unilluminated
69 Spectacle
70 Refute
71 Past spouses

DOWN
1 Exalted poet
2 Makeup specialist?
3 Niagara Falls feeder
4 Live wire
5 Hold on tight!
6 Turncoat
7 Fine drops
8 Extended gaze
9 An arm and a leg
10 Past one's prime
11 Luster
12 Lively dance
13 Affirmative responses
18 __-Magnon
19 Waiting-room call
24 Silvery food fish
26 Stage award
27 Small vipers
28 Closed circuit
29 Goad
31 Subordinate to
34 Welder's gas
35 Clemens nom de plume
37 Connery movie
38 Billy or nanny
39 "Only Time" singer
41 French painter Magritte
42 Omnipotent
47 Listen to
49 Live
50 Wood files
51 Moral code
52 Blackmore heroine
53 Planted
55 Harbor craft
58 Lateral part
60 Tunisian port
61 Tours to be
62 Admonishing sounds
64 Triumphed
65 Foil material

By James E. Buell
Edgewater, FL
4/7/04

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

W	A	G	S		C	O	N	S		B	U	R	P	S
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Did you know?

DID YOU KNOW...

"Ultrasound reveals that a baby is healthy and very *malikot*," according to the text message that Sen. Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan has been sending to close friends. His wife, Sharon Cuneta, is having a delicate pregnancy. The couple is still waiting to know whether their baby will be a boy or a girl. "All is 'A-OK' in God's grace," Kiko said.

OPENS APRIL 10!
MTRCB RATING R-18 | Strictly for ADULTS No one below 18 yrs. may be admitted

GODMOTHERS: Fashion guru Rene Salud, former beauty queen Evangeline Pascual and make-up artist Ricci Chan have the task of keeping the contestants in line and in the contest.

Reality TV . . .

From page A26

eliminated will also be compensated for every episode of "Buhay Beauty Queen" they appear in.

The Mutya winner will also represent the country in the Miss Asia Pacific Quest in October this year.

No 'Fear Factor'

The contestants will undergo beauty makeovers, fitness training, personality development, speech and etiquette lessons, as well as ramp and print modelling sessions, said Recio.

"This is no 'Fear Factor,'" she stressed. "We will not make them do things that are not connected to the beauty contest. They will be judged according to their performance in a particular event or exercise."

Just like in Fox Network's "American Idol," the "fairy godmothers" can "scold the contestants if they want," said Pascual.

Two den mothers, Lon Adalia and Sandy Hontiveros, will make sure the contestants will keep their appointments.

"The TV program will chronicle the candidates' journey to queenhood," said "Buhay Beauty Queen" host Jeffrey Quizon.

The contestants started taping for the show last April 2. Lino Cayetano, son of the late Sen. Rene "Compañero" Cayetano, co-directs the program with Aleah Aliporo.

GMA 7's "Starstruck" is Cayetano's directorial debut. Aliporo is the director of "Wazzup Wazzup" and "The Adventures of Maverick and Ariel," also on ABC 5.

PHOTOS BY JIMMY DY

GETTING REAL: For some of these contestants, reality might bite as the three godmothers and the audience have the power to vote them out even before coronation night.

MTRCB RATING ▶ GP | For GENERAL PATRONAGE ALL AGES ADMITTED.

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Special Easter Presentation for the Family!
SPECIAL ADVANCE SHOWING TODAY!
REGULAR RUN BEGINS APRIL 10

Singing tilt for mature singers

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

SOME years ago, **Oprah Winfrey** saw how effectively "American Idol" discovered wonderful unknown singing talents all over the United States, and transformed them into stars.

There was just one catch, however: Quite a number of the singing starlets produced were rather young, and thus on the raw side. This was because the talent search had set an age limit of 25 years.

"American Idol" was doing a great job otherwise—but what about the more mature unknown musical talents out there? What chance did they have of being discovered in their 30s, or even later?

Didn't they also deserve an opportunity to shine, and affect people positively with their singing talent? And there was the additional plus factor of the experience that comes with age. Older people are generally more interesting and put together because they've learned from living, and this makes them better than younger performers.

After evaluating the situation, Oprah decided to help harness all that overlooked and wasted singing talent by staging a competition for mature singers on her popular talk-variety TV show. Thousands of adult talents auditioned, and they bowled the audition masters over with their combination of talent and experience.

Recently, we caught the unique tilt's finals on "Oprah," and we were similarly blown away by the finalists' performances.

The roster of mature singers included a doctor and a number of housewives and mothers. For many years, they had subsumed their singing talent to their work at home, in the office or the clinic, but it is now their time to show everyone how well they could sing.

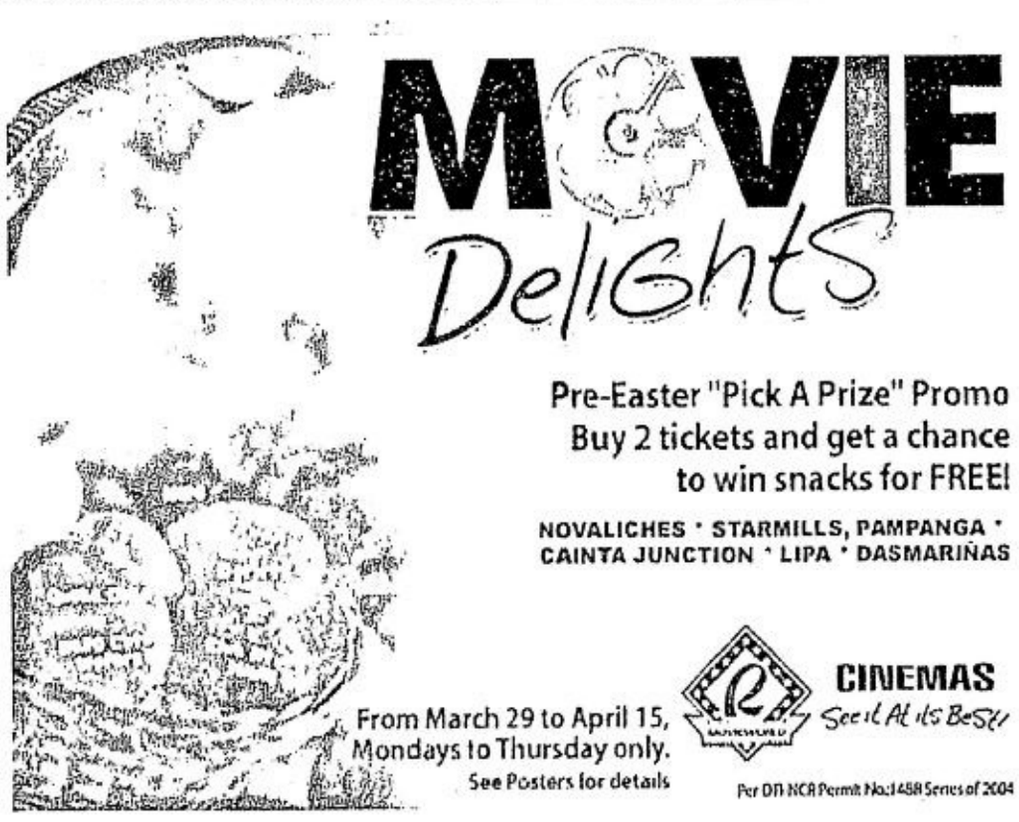
—They did that and more. They sang with heart and soul, asserting their individuality not just as singers but also as people. And their talent, experience and determination shone through.

The top winner was clearly the best in the group, but the tilt wasn't really about spotlighting only one talent. It showcased the excellence of the mature musical artist, and proved that, in an entertainment era dominated by the mystique of youth, adult artists still have an important musical role to play.

Fact is, this point didn't even need to be made because, in every musical period, mature singers have always been an essential experience.

Look at today's enduring stars like **Barbra Streisand** and **Dionne Warwick**—and even singing icons who are no longer with us, like **Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley** and two of the Beatles. They re-

SINGING/ A23



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ENTERTAINMENT

Reality TV invades Mutya

By Marinel R. Cruz

BEAUTY and brains may no longer be enough to win the Mutya ng Pilipinas crown. This year, Mutya contestants will have to contend with three judges and the audience who have the power to vote them out even before the finals.

That's because Mutya ng Pilipinas 2004 has adopted the elimination process employed by the US talent show "American Idol," where contenders are booted out through audience response.

The 2004 Mutya ng Pilipinas winner will receive a cash prize of P1 million and a management contract with ABC 5, said Vivian Recio, ABC 5 vice president for local production. The cash prize is by far the biggest to be given in a beauty contest.

The beauty competition will be held over a 13-week period and aired over ABC 5 at 9:30 p.m. beginning Monday, April 12. The TV show is titled "Buhay Beauty Queen," and will be very much like a reality TV version of a beauty contest. It will show the reality of training, cultivating and enhancing the charms of the contestants through grooming, poise, etiquette lessons, among others.

"The show will focus on the lives of the contestants from Day 1 to coronation night," said ABC 5 senior vice president for corporate affairs Terra Daffon during the press presentation of the 35 Mutya candidates at the Manila Diamond Hotel last Monday.

"Expect a lot of drama and a lot of twists and turns, especially when one or more girls get eliminated during the course of the 13 weeks," added Daffon.

The contestants will be voted out "at irregular intervals" by their "fairy godmothers" or members of the "pre-pageant council," composed of fashion expert Renee Salud, 1972 Miss World first runner-up Evangeline Pascual, and make-up expert Ricci Chan.

Pay per episode

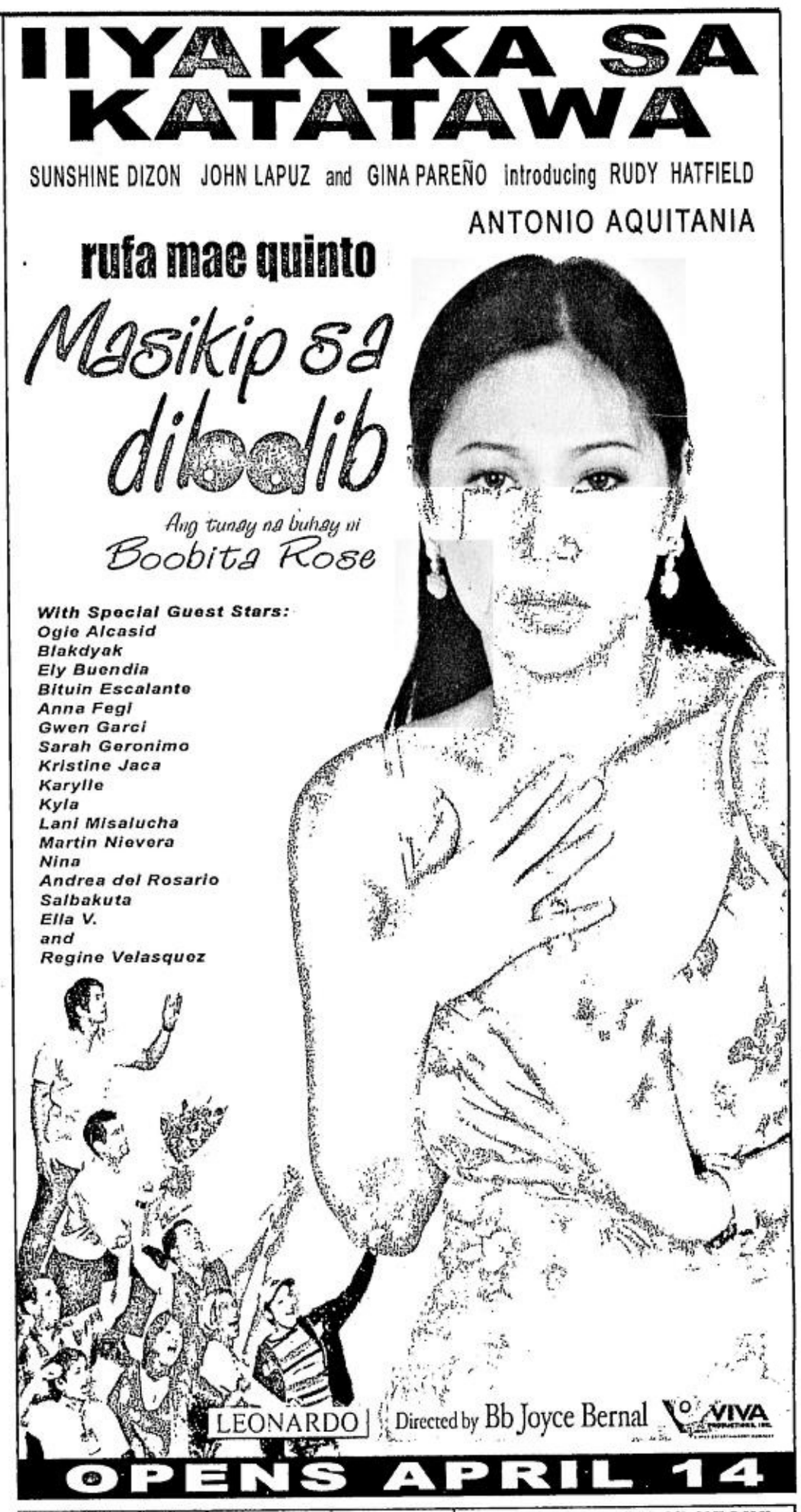
Televiewers will also have a chance to vote for their favorite contestants by sending text messages, according to Recio.

The remaining 10 or 15 contestants will compete for the Mutya ng Pilipinas crown during the final awards show in July, said Recio.

But some of those who will be voted out could be "invited" to join the contest proper, "if they continue participating and doing well in the pre-pageant training program," Recio added.

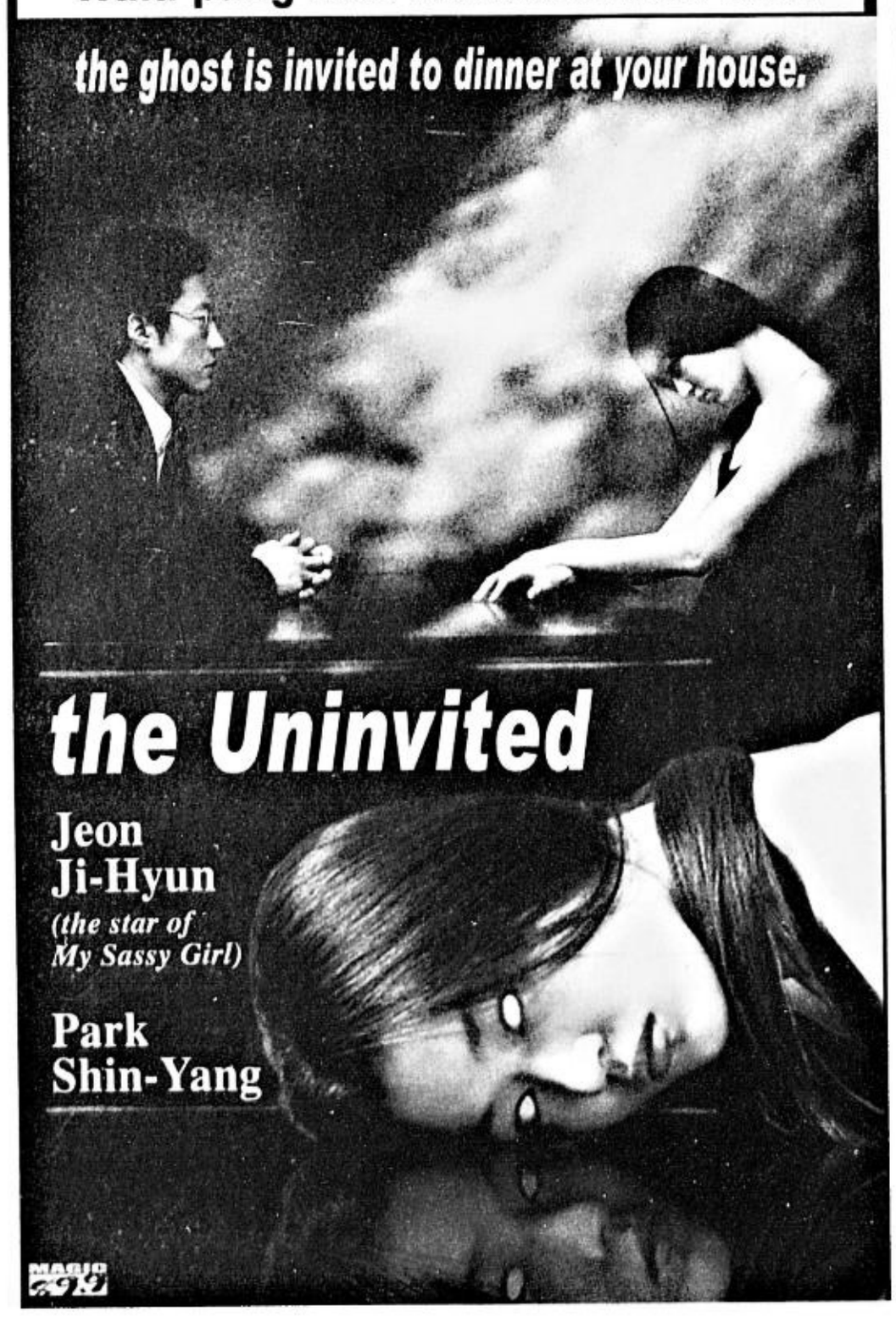
She said contestants who would be

REALITY/ A25



MTRCB RATING R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND ABOVE

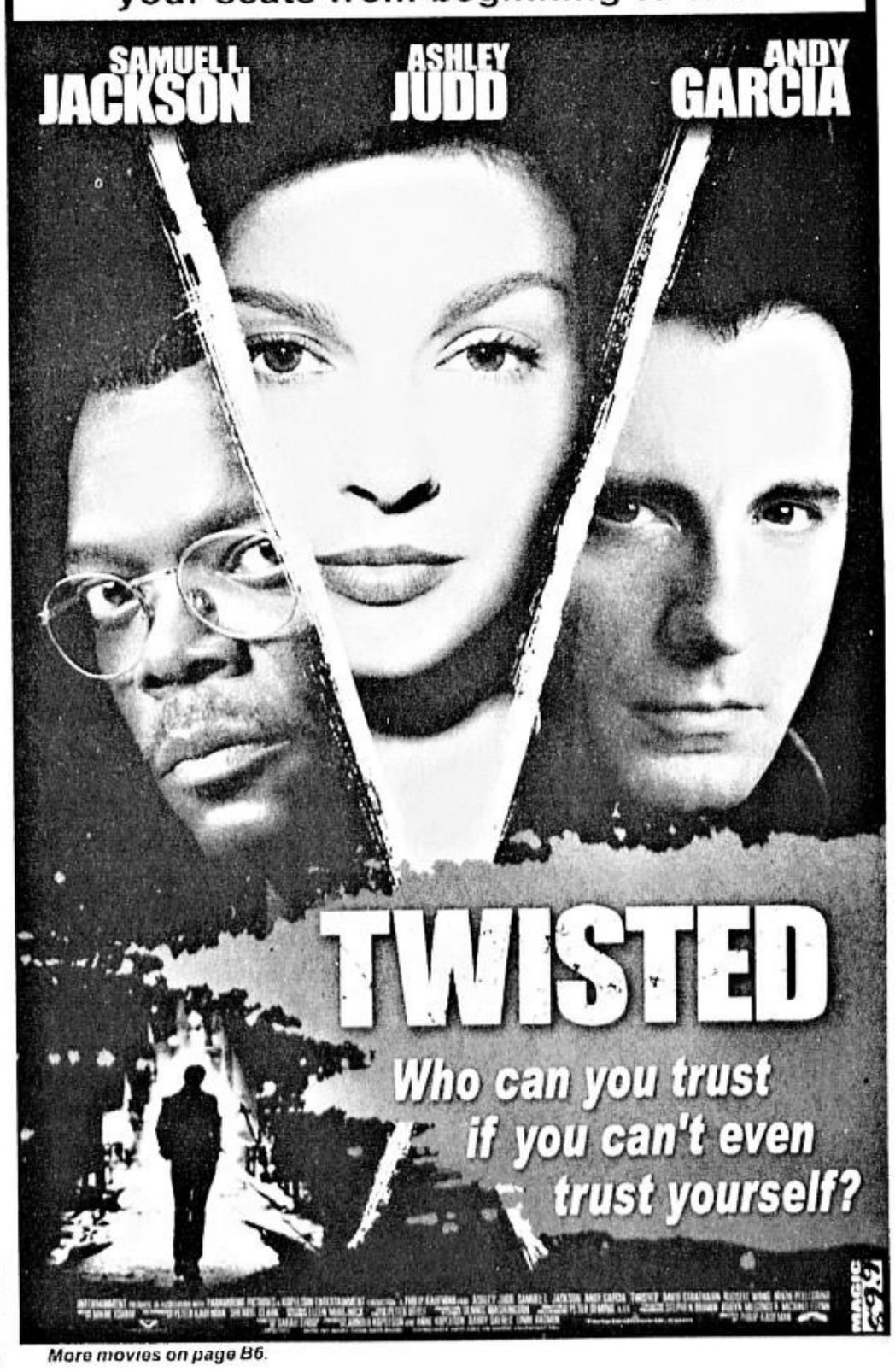
SASAPIAN KA NG MULTO SA *ABRIL 10.*
Wala pang mas nakakasindak dito!



MTRCB RATING R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND ABOVE

OPENS APRIL 14

After *"Kiss the Girls"* & *"High Crimes"*, Ashley Judd returns in another suspense thriller that will keep you at the edge of your seats from beginning to end.



More movies on page B6.

BUSINESS

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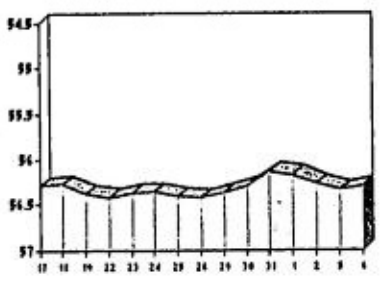
Editor Raul O. Marcelo
Assistant Editor Corrie S. Narisma

Inflation rate rose to 4.2% in March

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱ 56.295 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., April 6, 2004

¥ 106.00 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., April 6, 2004

GOLD: $424.50-425.00

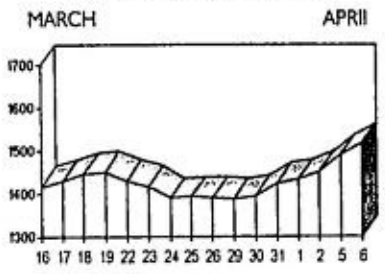
per ounce Hong Kong, April 2, 2004

STOCK MARKET

Shares close 1.8% higher

SHARE prices closed 1.80 percent higher yesterday, pushing the key index to its strongest finish in 10 weeks as investors bought into telecom and energy companies with bullish earnings prospects, dealers said.

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Leading all gainers was Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT), which added P40 to P1,055, its highest level in more than four years.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index gained 26.76 points to 1,516.81. It moved in a range of 1,493.21-1,516.87.

Volume turnover fell to 128.37 million shares but value rose to P730.6 million from Monday's 224.5 million shares worth P628.05 million.

In the broader market, gainers led losers 46 to nine, with 38 stocks unchanged.

The all-shares index was up 23.32 points at 988.56. The commercial-industrial index rose 48.19 to 2,375.24.

Property was up 6.34 at 537.19, while mining advanced 15.00 to 1,480.91. Oil was unchanged at 1.13. Banking and financial services gained 2.94 to 437.53.

Dealers said the composite index sustained its gains for the sixth straight trading day, with the improving economic prospects of the country's major trading partners—the United States and Japan—helping to boost buying interest. *AFP*

By Michelle V. Remo

CONSUMER prices rose at a faster rate in March, compared with year-ago and month-ago levels, mainly due to significant increases in the cost of food and oil products, the National Statistics Office said yesterday.

The NSO, an attached agency of the National Economic and Development Authority, yesterday reported that using the year 2000 as a base, the inflation rate for March increased to 4.2 percent from only 4 percent in February. Using 1994 as a base, the increase in consumer prices in March was also higher at 3.8 percent from only 3.4 percent.

Economic Planning Secretary Romulo L. Neri was, however, quick to add that the March inflation rate remained within the government's target of 4-5 percent for 2004.

Neda said earlier that the March inflation would be higher than the previous month due to lower supply of certain basic commodities.

Despite the rise, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura told reporters that "we still see inflation to be within the (target) range but most likely, at the higher end."

"Monetary policy will be cautious due to expected increases in oil prices, a recent transport fare adjustment and possible wage hikes," he added.

Buenaventura, however, said there was no need for the BSP to take further monetary action for now despite the higher inflation rate in March.

INFLATION RATES

March 2003 to March 2004, base year=1994

"What caused inflation pressure were the increases in the prices of food items such as rice, corn, milk, cooking oil, pork, beef, and selected vegetables. This is contrary to what happened last month when lower food prices of some items such as chicken eased the pressure on inflation," said Neri in a statement.

Neri said the public could expect higher inflation rates in April as demand was expected to pick up during the Lenten season.

He added that the average 12-centavo increase in the price of fuel would also trigger higher inflation rate in April.

The recent move to increase transport fare from 25 centavos to 63 centavos for every additional kilometer is likewise expected to put additional pressure on the inflation rate, said Neri.

Despite the higher inflation figure for March, the Neda dismissed the possibility of "uncontrolled price increases," stressing that the rate was still below levels targeted by the government for the year.

The March figure brings the year-to-date inflation rate at 3.5 percent and 4 percent, using the years 1994 and 2000 as bases, respectively.

The inflation rate for food rose to 4.4 percent in March from only 3.4 percent in February. Food items that recorded higher inflation rates included rice, corn, cereal preparation, dairy products, and eggs.

On a positive note, the inflation rate for fuel, light and water slowed down to 1.9 percent from only 3.2 percent the previous month. *With a report from Doris C. Dumlao and AFP*

Exports up 7.5% as electronics sales rise

PHILIPPINE exports rose 7.5 percent in the year through February as healthy global demand for electronics boosted its key trade sector, but a sharp rise in inflation stirred concern that the weak peso was pushing up prices.

The National Statistics Office said yesterday that February exports rose to $2.999 billion from $2.789 billion in the same period a year earlier, outstripping the 4.1 percent rise in the year through January.

Electronics exports, accounting for two-thirds of the total, were 6.6 percent higher at $1.976 billion.

"It's in line with expectations," said Song Seng Wun, regional economist with G.K. Goh Securities in Singapore.

Philippine exports, which analysts said were under threat from Chinese competition, still fell short of many neighbors'.

Malaysia's February exports were up 16.7 percent on a year earlier, while Taiwan's export orders rocketed 34.7 percent.

Philippine exports failed to keep pace with imports in January, leaving the country with a hefty trade deficit of $336 million even as most of its neighbors enjoyed surpluses.

In the first two months of 2004, exports were up 5.8 percent at $5.843 billion, from year-ago level of $5.522 billion.

Filipinos go to the polls on May 10 to vote for a new president and 17,000 other elected officials. Political uncertainty has shunted the peso to a record low of 56.45 to dollar earlier. It closed at 56.295 yesterday.

The weaker peso makes Philippine goods more competitive, but economists say it is not all good news for business, partly because it raises worries about the rising cost of funding the country's $60 billion foreign-debt mountain. It could also push up interest rates. *Reuters*

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MR. BEARBULL

Ron Nathan

DEAR Readers, in case you have been wondering where I have been for the past month, I was in Los Angeles making a series which will be coming to your screen very soon. It is called, The Bachelor, and with the help of special effects, laser surgery and anti-wrinkle cream, they turned me into a handsome hunk named Mike Firestone. I had to court 25 gorgeous girls and then choose one. I was provided with a stretch limousine, limitless amounts of money and wonderful restaurants in which to woo them. I had to get to know each one intimately, if you get my meaning. Well, for the first two weeks, I was full of enthusiasm, but after 20 days, I couldn't keep it up. The last five days, I was on an intravenous drip of dextrose and viagra. I don't know why I got so tired. Maybe because my name was Firestone.

When I returned, I found a charming letter from the Olympic committee in Athens. They felt bad about not letting me enter the Decathlon just because I was not a natural-born Greek but the Supreme Court voted against it. Anyway, they honored me by inviting me to carry the torch part of the way across the Philippines. They suggested that I carry it from Laoag to Legaspi, but I said it was too far for a man of my age, especially in this heat. So we compromised. I will be carrying it from Glorietta to Landmark.

After the mysterious sinking of the SuperFerry, possibly due to sabotage, Dr. Stanley Ho came over here to make sure that his Floating Restaurant is still intact. But just in case something happens to it, he has started a sinking fund. Actually, I met him in Macao many years ago and he is a chow mein fellow. Macao used to be nothing but casinos and brothels. I hope he is not planning to open up here. We have enough casinos and ho's.

* * *

In truth, I have not been anywhere but I have been writing every week for the past five years, the last two for the INQUIRER. I have only missed one article, when I was having an MRI scan on my kidneys, and I felt that I needed a time-out. The publisher and the editor readily agreed and I think they were both probably quite relieved. But I am back for better or for worse.

Five weeks ago, the market was quite high and I was feeling bearish so I told subscribers to SELL their shares and stay away from the bond market as I felt sure that yields would rise. I was right, on both counts, and the yield on the three-year Treasury bond jumped from 9 percent to 11 percent in six months. Even the 91-day benchmark soared 119 basis points in one week, making borrowing and mortgages more expensive, and debt harder to service. By the beginning of last week, the Phisix had dropped to below the 1,400 level, and the degree of risk had fallen to single digits, so I wrote that the market was a BUY. I was not willing to give a go-signal because net turnover (excluding cross sales) was rather low and a bull market cannot be sustained without high volume. Silly me, I forgot that last Wednesday was Groundhog Day, the quarter day preceding the end of the tax year. So, on March 31, turnover suddenly soared to P1.2 billion, including P630 million cross sales, and the index opened 28 points higher.

Just as witches fly on their broomsticks at Halloween, so fund managers get busy tidying up their portfolios on March 31. They sell all the shares that went down, such as Meralco B, so that they do not appear to have losses on their books. And they push up all the stocks that they bought cheaply so that they appear to be geniuses. That is why TEL, which they bought around P500, suddenly spurted from P890 to over P1,000 in one week. Now they are buying back Meralco B for the new tax year. They are better at the art of manipulation than most chiropractors. I should know. I used to be a fund manager in London.

I did give one excellent BUY signal of ABSP at P17. Following the story that Dolphy's show was about to be axed, the shares dropped four days in a row, wiping over P3 billion off the value of the company. I thought that was an excessive emotional reaction to a story, which ultimately proved to be ill founded. So I told everyone to BUY, and after I sent out the signal, I bought a chunk for myself, which is now showing a 6-figure profit. The degree of risk had fallen from 82 to 1 in four days, using a slowed indicator, so it had to be right. It is now 94.

I also mentioned Petron at P2.65 and reiterated my view, expressed 11 months ago, when the shares were P1.80, that the company would pay a 20-centavo cash dividend early in May, and possibly a 15 percent or 20 percent stock dividend in June or July. This is not from charts but from historical data. Other people picked this up and the shares are now P3.05.

The news from the US on the unemployment figures was sensational. After only 21,000 new jobs in February, March produced an incredible 309,000. Some people were on strike in February and went back in March, so the number needs adjusting, but it is still excellent, though probably unsustainable. This is good news for the whole of the Asia-Pacific region and all Asian markets that are open today rose sharply, including our own. The degree of risk on the Phisix is now 87.

The survey released today shows President Macapagal-Arroyo still neck and neck with Fernando Poe Jr., allowing for the 3 percent margin of error and the 7.6 percent undecided voters. So it is still a very open contest with FPJ losing momentum because of his continued non-appearances. The remaining contenders are so far behind that they appear to have little chance of winning.

I do not know if there will be an article next week because this column appears on Tuesday or Wednesday and the stock market is closed the rest of the week. So what will I write about? Maybe I will tell you about my forthcoming trip to the provinces. It is good to be back. *(mrbearbull@hotmail.com)*

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SM PRIME HOLDINGS

NOTICE OF REGULAR ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING
APRIL 22, 2004, 3:00 P.M.
RIZAL BALLROOMS B&C, MAKATI SHANGRI-LA HOTEL
MAKATI CITY

TO ALL STOCKHOLDERS:

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE THAT THE 2004 ANNUAL MEETING OF STOCKHOLDERS OF SM PRIME HOLDINGS, INC. WILL BE HELD ON APRIL 22, 2004 AT 3:00 P.M. AT THE RIZAL BALLROOMS B&C, MAKATI SHANGRI-LA HOTEL, MAKATI CITY. THE PROPOSED AGENDA OF THE MEETING IS SET FORTH BELOW:

AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER.
2. CERTIFICATION OF NOTICE AND QUORUM.
3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING OF STOCKHOLDERS HELD ON APRIL 28, 2003.
4. PRESENTATION OF PRESIDENT'S REPORT.
5. PRESENTATION AND APPROVAL OF AUDITED CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2003.
6. GENERAL RATIFICATION OF THE ACTS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND THE MANAGEMENT FROM THE DATE OF THE LAST ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING UP TO THE DATE OF THIS MEETING.
7. ELECTION OF DIRECTORS FOR 2004-2005.
8. APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITORS.
9. AMENDMENT OF BY-LAWS TO INCLUDE PROVISIONS ON THE NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF INDEPENDENT DIRECTORS.
10. OTHER MATTERS.
11. ADJOURNMENT.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS HAS FIXED THE END OF TRADING HOURS OF THE PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE (PSE) ON MARCH 23, 2004 AS THE RECORD DATE FOR THE DETERMINATION OF STOCKHOLDERS ENTITLED TO NOTICE OF AND TO VOTE AT SUCH MEETING AND ANY ADJOURNMENT THEREOF.

FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE IN REGISTERING YOUR ATTENDANCE, PLEASE BRING IDENTIFICATION (SUCH AS COMPANY I.D., PASSPORT, OR DRIVER'S LICENSE).

REGISTRATION STARTS AT 1:30 P.M. AND CLOSES AT EXACTLY 3:00 P.M.

MAKATI CITY, MARCH 15, 2004.

BY THE ORDER OF THE BOARD OR DIRECTORS

(SGD.) EMMANUEL C. PARAS
CORPORATE SECRETARY
SM PRIME HOLDINGS, INC.

BSP cracks down on erring insurers

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas has started to crack down on insurance companies offering trust products to the public without a license.

In an interview, BSP Deputy Governor Alberto Reyes said that the BSP has received reports that there are insurance companies already engaged in the trust business even without a license.

"We are trying to find out which insurance companies are doing trust business because they need a license for that," Reyes said.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said that under existing laws, insurance companies selling trust products without a license would be penalized.

"It's very clear in the General Banking Law," Buenaventura said. "If they want to engage in the trust business, they must get a license from us."

The Philippine Life Insurance Association is now seeking authority from the Department of Finance to engage in the trust business—traditionally, the domain of banks.

Philippine American Life and General Insurance Co. president Jose Cuisia Jr., a former BSP governor and last year's president of the insurance association, said he had written a letter to the DOF to clarify the matter.

Unlike deposits which carry fixed interest rates and are risk-free up to P100,000, trust accounts offer higher yields but the risks are borne by the client. There have been some complaints against banks acting as trustees because their clients are not fully informed of the risks.

"Insurance companies also act as trustees, given the fact that we receive premiums," Cuisia said. "We should also be allowed to manage tax-qualified retirement funds."

"We have the actuarial expertise to handle these funds and that's one of our advantages," he added. "We want to compete on a level playing field."

Cuisia said at the moment, the only thing that is stopping insurance firms from handling tax-qualified retirement funds is a Bureau of Internal Revenue circular which stated that only banks are allowed to do so.

Under the General Banking Act of 2000, however, only a stock corporation duly authorized by the Monetary Board to engage in trust business can act as a trustee or administer any trust or hold property in trust for others.

A trust entity, before it can engage in trust or other fiduciary business, will have to comply with the minimum paid-in capital requirement which will be determined by the Monetary Board, the BSP's policy-making body. Before transacting business, the BSP is also mandated to ask the trust entity for a deposit of P500,000 or higher, as determined by the MB, to ensure faithful performance.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of April 6, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	16.75	16.75	16.75	16.75	103,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	47	47.5	47	47	663,200
Citystate Savings Bank	16.25	16.25	16.25	16.25	2,200
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	40.5	41	40.5	41	210,900
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	100,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	23.75	24	23.75	24	284,300
Philippine National Bank	23.25	23.25	23.25	23.25	300
Phil. Savings Bank	26.5	26.5	26.5	26.5	10,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	2,000
Security Bank Corp.	16.75	17	16.75	17	15,000
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	1.02	1.04	1.02	1.04	140,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	2200	2200	2200	2200	120
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.34	1.34	1.34	1.34	30,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	135	135	135	135	200
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1570	1580	1570	1580	1,520
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	21.5	22.25	21.5	22.25	20,500
Diversified Fin. Network	3	3	3	3	5,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.65	0.67	0.65	0.67	320,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	875	905	875	900	116,340
Ipeople Inc.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	138,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.04	0.043	0.04	0.043	2,100,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.036	0.037	0.034	0.037	3,000,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.78	1.78	12,276,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1025	1055	1025	1055	284,780
Ivantage Corp.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	50,000
Philweb Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.013	11,700,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	18	18.75	18	18.75	113,300
Manila Electric Co. B	27.5	28.5	27.5	28	1,146,700
Petron Corp.	3.1	3.15	3	3.1	9,799,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2.22	2.38	2.22	2.38	70,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.95	1	0.95	1	30,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.95	3.05	2.95	3	138,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	20,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	50,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62	53,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.54	1.56	1.54	1.56	1,340,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	42,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	28.5	28.5	28.5	28.5	5,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	18.75	19	18.75	19	742,700
RFM Corp.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	110,000
San Miguel Corp. A	57	57.5	57	57.5	160,700
San Miguel Corp. B	71	72	71	71.5	116,700
Universal Robina Corp.	6.4	6.5	6.4	6.5	25,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.25	630,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	6.4	6.5	6.4	6.4	2,282,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.85	2.85	2.85	2.85	134,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1	1	1	1	50,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.48	1.5	1.48	1.5	40,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	10,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.53	0.54	0.52	0.53	4,070,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.1	0.12	0.1	0.12	500,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.135	0.135	550,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	400,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.022	0.028	0.022	0.028	1,300,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1	1	1	1	290,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	22.25	23	21.75	23	590,500
Ionics Inc.	1.28	1.28	1.28	1.28	102,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.78	1.78	1.78	1.78	128,000
Macroasia Corp.	0.49	0.5	0.49	0.5	30,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.12	1.18	1.1	1.18	10,251,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.27	3,830,000
Philcomsat Holdings Corp.	1.18	1.18	1.18	1.18	5,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	40,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	100,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	50,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	14.5	15	14.5	15	31,800
Seafront Resources Corp.	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	100,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.0825	0.0825	0.0825	0.0825	700,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	10,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	540,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.12	1.2	1.12	1.16	644,000
Pryce Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	140,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	700,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.23	0.26	0.23	0.26	150,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	22	22.75	22	22.5	298,100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,300
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	6	6	6	6	47,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.5	5.6	5.5	5.6	7,498,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.205	0.215	0.205	0.21	2,240,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.08	1.1	1.06	1.06	3,989,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.185	0.185	0.18	0.185	480,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	110,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	1.78	1.78	1.78	1.78	100,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6	6	5.9	6	8,638,000
MINING					
Benguet Corp. B	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	1,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.26	200,000
Polar Mines & Dev't Corp.	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	200,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	50,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	30,000,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	1,562,740	52,128,100.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	72,723,320	579,685,235.00
PRO	23,055,000	98,419,020.00
Mining	451,000	76,400.00
OIL	30,000,000	90,000.00
GRAND TOTALS:	127,792,060	730,398,755.00

	AVERAGES	
Bank & Fin Svc	437.53	UP 2.94
Comm'l & Ind'l	2,375.24	UP 48.19
PRO	537.19	UP 6.34
Mining	1,480.91	UP 15.00
OIL	1.13	UNCH 0.00
SME	100.00	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	988.56	UP 23.32
Composite	1,516.81	UP 26.76

NO. OF ADVANCES: 46; NO. OF DECLINES: 9; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 38; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 93; NO. OF TRADES: 2,555

CURRENCIES

April 6, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.832154	1.000000	56.3060
Japan	Yen	0.007930	0.009530	0.5366
United Kingdom	Pound	1.515603	1.821300	102.5501
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.106844	0.128394	7.2294
Switzerland	Franc	0.638058	0.766754	43.1729
Canada	Dollar	0.633588	0.761383	42.8704
Singapore	Dollar	0.495477	0.595415	33.5254
Australia	Dollar	0.626528	0.752899	42.3927
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.207424	2.652661	149.3607
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.221908	0.266667	15.0150
Brunei	Dollar	0.494007	0.593648	33.4259
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000097	0.000116	0.0065
Thailand	Baht	0.021294	0.025589	1.4408
UAE	Dirham	0.226596	0.272301	15.3322
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.201700	67.6629
Argentina	Peso	0.292240	0.351185	19.7738
Brazil	REAL	0.289043	0.347343	19.5575
Denmark	Kroner	0.134318	0.161410	9.0884
India	Rupee	0.019100	0.022952	1.2923
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.219017	0.263193	14.8193
Mexico	New Peso	0.074686	0.089750	5.0535
New Zealand	Dollar	0.540395	0.649393	36.5647
Norway	Kroner	0.119617	0.143744	8.0936
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014574	0.017513	0.9861
South Africa	Rand	0.130415	0.156720	8.8243
Korea	Won	0.000729	0.000876	0.0493
Sweden	Kroner	0.108808	0.130755	7.3623
Syria	Pound	0.016111	0.019361	1.0901
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025378	0.030497	1.7172
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000434	0.000522	0.0294

Peza grants ecozone status to GSII, 9 other firms

Ronnel W. Domingo

THE PHILIPPINE Economic Zone Authority recently granted economic zone export status to Global Steelworks International Inc. (GSII) and nine other new enterprises, which represent a total of P1.77 billion in investments.

During a board meeting held last week, Peza allowed GSII to register as a new economic zone export enterprise. Formerly known as the National Steel Corp. (NSC), the GSII is shelling out P1.57 billion in its facility at the Global Ispat Industrial Park in Iligan City.

London-based Global Infrastructure Holdings Ltd. (GIHL), the holding company of India's second largest private steel firm Ispat Industries Ltd., acquired NSC for some P13 billion earlier this year.

In a phone interview, GSII president Vijay M. Jhanji said the company's new status meant that it would be exempted from paying duties and the 10-percent value added tax imposed on the importation of steel slabs and hot-rolled steel coils.

According to Peza data, GSII aims to export steel products to China, Thailand and Malaysia and projects earnings at an average of $288 million a year.

The other nine new enterprises given ecozone status include electronic equipment parts maker Fortunecross Philippines Inc.; rubber parts maker Wakorepco Manufacturing Philippines Corp.; paint maker Bary's Industrial Corp.; plastic bag maker Hong Tai Plastic Manufacturing (Philippines) Ltd. Inc.; compact disc maker MHN Optic Media Corp.; fashion accessories maker Mosaic Nine Two Five Corp.; gasket maker Sudo Gasket Industry Inc.; computer hardware parts maker Young-Sin Tronics Inc. and microwave parts maker 2Pi Microwave Technology Inc.

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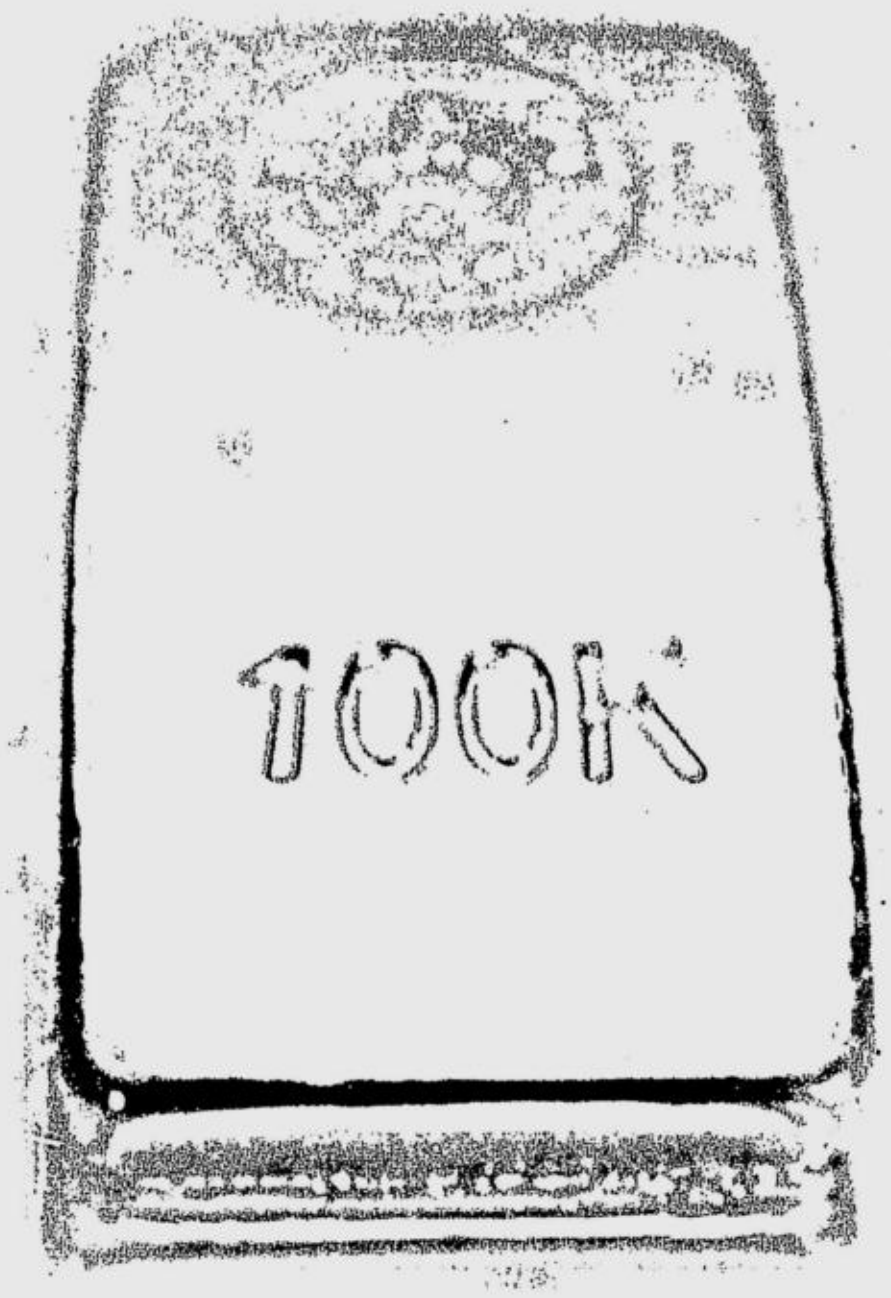

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VARIANT	SRP	LOW DP	12	18	24	36	48	60
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SR A/T	891,000	100,000	68,410	47,119	37,437	26,839	21,899	18,780
GSX A/T	842,000	100,000	63,978	44,066	35,014	25,102	20,481	17,564
GLX A/T	802,000	100,000	60,360	41,574	33,036	23,684	19,324	16,570
GL GAS	693,000	100,000	50,501	34,784	27,645	19,819	16,171	13,864
DLX GAS (15.20%dp)	658,000	100,000	47,335	32,603	25,914	18,578	15,159	12,995
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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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The Widest Reaching Classifieds

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Sundays 12:00 noon every Thursday

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Jason 3rd Massage 4372542

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L-BAHAY 9206784 4540520

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MANILA

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GH SJ 3BR Condo 8-9M 4121825

LOT

OTHER PROVINCIAL

BAGUIO CITY LOAKAN ROAD Nr corner Airport Road Front Elem. School 1,670sqm/T741-5381

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LOT

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REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

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LOT

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CONDO/TWNHSE

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APARTMENT

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CONDO/TWNHSE

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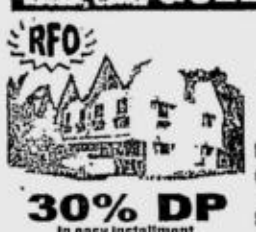
RFO



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CARS/VANS/BRIDAL 8969956

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1.5% CARLOAN 373-6519

1.5% CARLOAN 533-8254

1.5% Easy Carloan 7815352/55

1.5% Fast Car Loan 6560140

1.5% w/oTaking Car 3650974/75

1.5% w/oTaking Car 3732081-82

1.5% w/oTaking Car 7228942-43

•1HR Fast Car Loan 7125202•

2% w/o Taking Car 7262780

2% w/oTaking Car 8870490/95

2% w/oTaking Car 8959454

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BUSN DRS OFW 524-3197

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DOG TRAINER 0919-3419012

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PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

An Extrajudicial Settlement of the Estate of Jose B Catindig was executed & acknowledged by his children/heirs on 11 Sept 2003 before Pasig City Notary Public Maria Lourdes C. San Pablo (Doc 46, Page 10, Bk I, S 2003), after execution & acknowledgement by Consuelo A Catindig, widow of Jose B Catindig & mother of said heirs, of a Repudiation of Inheritance on 10 Sept 2003 before the aforementioned notary public (Doc 45, Page 10, Bk I, S 2003). (PDI-3/24, 31, 4/7, 2004)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late spouses Vicente S. Filart and Pacita G. Filart was extrajudicially settled by their heirs per Doc. No. 102; Page No. 22; Book No. 663; Series of 2001 before Notary Public Jose S. Padolina of Quezon City.
(PDI-Mar 24, 31&Apnl 7,2004)

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E-mail: psantiago@adb.org or fpalabrica@adb.org

INVITATION FOR PREQUALIFICATION TO BID FOR PROVISION OF OFFICE SUPPLIES/EQUIPMENT STORES MANAGEMENT SERVICES (ADB/OAS-2004/003)

1. The Asian Development Bank (ADB), a multilateral development finance institution headquartered in Manila, Philippines, invites interested companies to apply for prequalification to bid for the provision of office supplies/equipment stores management services.
2. The Contractor shall manage, operate and maintain the office, computer-related and reproduction supplies, and office equipment stores in the ADB premises.
3. Prequalification documents may be obtained from the Head, Contracts Section, General Services Division, Office of Administrative Services room 4223W, at the above address from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on any working day starting from **6-14 April 2004**, upon presentation of the receipt of payment in cash or manager's check of a non-refundable fee of Pesos: Three Hundred (P300.00) at ADB Cash Room, Room G239W.
4. Last day for submission of application for prequalification is on **16 April 2004**.
5. Only prequalified bidders shall be invited to participate in the bidding exercise to be conducted by ADB. Bid documents will be issued to prequalified bidders from **03 May 2004**.
6. This invitation does not entail any commitment on the part of ADB, either financial or otherwise. Any cost of preparation of prequalification documents shall be borne solely by the applicant. ADB reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications for prequalifications.

(Sgd.) **NORMIN S. PAKPAHAN**
Director, General Services Division
Office of Administrative Services

(PDI – April 6 & 7, 2004)

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Quezon City

ANNOUNCEMENT OF BIDDING

The National Food Authority (NFA) wishes to announce that it will be conducting a bidding on **May 04, 2004** at **10:00 a.m.** at the FOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER BUILDING FTI Complex, Taguig, Metro Manila, among all interested rice suppliers for the supply of maximum 190,000 MT, 5% MOLSO, long grain white rice, 5%, 15% and 25% brokens of Thailand, Vietnam, U.S. and/or China origin in 50 kilograms net capacity polypropylene bags with an appropriated budget of Php 3.3B from corporate resources.

All interested suppliers are required to submit quotations for all specifications, all modes of payment and on the basis of a mandatory countertrade commitment and countertrade performed on best effort. Otherwise, bids will be considered non-responsive. Price shall be quoted in US$ per MT, CFR, FO, one (1) safe port, one/two safe berths under the following payment terms:

a. Documents Against Payment (D/P)
b. Documents Against Acceptance (D/A) with a tenor of one hundred eighty (180) days from B/L date

Arrival Period	Volume to be Offered (MT) Percentage of max. vol. to be awarded
May/June 2004	at least 50%
July 2004	balance

Government suppliers who have delivered to the NFA within the last two (2) years (2002-2003) and who do not have a bad track record may be awarded a maximum of 150,000 MT, 5% MOLSO. Other government suppliers and private suppliers without bad track record may be awarded a maximum of 15,000 MT, 5% MOLSO. Suppliers and/or source companies with pending import related accounts/liability except despatch/demurrage are considered to have bad track record. Vessels to be utilized should have a maximum load capacity of 15,000 MT.

Minimum volume to be offered per supplier shall be 10,000 MT per specification.

All bidders are required to post a bid bond equivalent to 10% of the highest value offered quantity in the form of cashier's/manager's check issued by a reputable bank in Metro Manila or an irrevocable standby Letter of Credit issued by a reputable commercial bank or in the case of an irrevocable stand-by L/C issued by a foreign bank, the same shall be confirmed by a reputable local bank.

Winning bidders are required to submit a performance bond equivalent to 10% of the value of the awarded quantity within three (3) banking days after receipt of the notice of award in the form of cashier's/manager's check issued by a reputable bank in Metro Manila or an irrevocable standby Letter of Credit issued by a reputable commercial bank or in the case of an irrevocable stand-by L/C issued by a foreign bank, the same shall be confirmed by a reputable local bank. Bid bond can be converted to performance bond.

List of Eligibility Requirements may be secured from the BAC Secretariat, 5th floor, NFA, Matimyas Bldg., 101 E. Rodriguez Sr. Ave., Quezon City starting **12 April 2004**.

The pre-bidding conference will be held on **19 April 2004** at 10:00 a.m. at the FOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER BUILDING FTI Complex, Taguig, Metro Manila.

Submission of eligibility envelope, technical proposal together with the bid bond and price offers will be between 8:00 a.m. to 9:55 a.m. on the tender date. Opening of bids will start exactly at 10:00 a.m.

The terms of reference and bid documents will be available starting **April 12-16, 2004** (8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.) upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P5,000.00.

The National Food Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bid proposals, to waive any required formality or defect therein and may accept the bid/s which is deemed most advantageous to the Agency.

(Sgd.) **GREGORIO Y. TAN, JR.**
Deputy Administrator and
Chairman, BAC

(PDI – April 7 & 14, 2004)

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The concept of Brand Management has gone into an evolutionary process ever since it was introduced by P & G in 1972. Several multinational companies introduced their own version at various stages and the concept has been modified to adopt to individual company's working environment and management style. In this seminar, participants will learn the key essentials of the brand management function particularly the key functional tasks that deal extensively in developing and building brand equity, brand marketing positioning, brand strategies, revitalizing and managing brand over time, etc.

Schedule : **April 27, 28 & 30, 2004** (Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday) 1:00 P.M. - 6:00 P.M.
ACCEED - AIM Conference Center, Makati City

Course Fee : PMA Member **P 5,000.**
Non-PMA Member **P 6,000.**

For inquiries, please call the Philippine Marketing Association Secretariat c/o Ms. Lydia Marinas
Tels: 634-5722; 634-4890 / Fax: 636-1451

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In Loving Memory of

ATTY. CLEMENTE PEÑALOSA HERALDO

(November 15, 1964 - April 1, 2004)

His loving wife **Ma. Victoria** and daughter **Ma. Cleo**; his parents **Rodolfo Sr.** and **Clemencia**; brothers and sisters **Nene & Bobby, Dodo & Gene, Jayson & Arlene, Clemen, Cesar**; nephews **Malvin, Marion, Ruarri, Remos, Arjay, Joseph, Joshua** and **Jonah**; in-laws, other relatives and friends request to join them in praying for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at St. John Bosco Chapel, Makati City.

Interment will be on Monday, April 12, 2004 at Loyola Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque City after 1:00 p.m. Mass at St. John Bosco Parish, Makati City.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
1. Copy of Death Certificate
2. Any identification document (I.D.)

DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT
MESSAGE OF THANKS
DEATH ANNIVERSARY
REQUIEMS

WE ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS and bank-to-bank payments

SYLVIA (Silbing) JIMENEZ SARANDI

Peacefully joined our Lord on April 4, 2004 at the age of 78.

Her loving children **Mario & Teresa Sarandi, Yasmin & Danilo Calma, Donna Yosuico, Mary Anne & Edward Barrios** and **Lynette & Steve Brewer.**

Her remains lie in state at the Jose Rizal Chapel, La Funeraria Paz-Sucat (inside Manila Memorial Park) Parañaque City.

PATRIA "PATTY" DELFIN VIDAL

(1917 – 2004)

Died on April 5, 2004 at the age of 86

She is survived by sons **Jerry & Julie Vidal, Viviene Vidal, Billy Cris Vidal, Greg & Laurni Vidal & Ana Marie M. Vidal**; grandchildren and other relatives and friends.

Her body lies in state at the St. Andrew Chapels, 2nd Floor of Holy Trinity Memorial Chapels, Dr. A. Santos Avenue, Parañaque City.

Cremation will be on April 8, 2004, 8:00 a.m. after the Mass to be held at the Holy Trinity Memorial Chapels.

Message of Thanks

The family of

JOSE MARIA "JONG" ARCENAS CARIÑO

(today, April 7, 2004 is Jong's 40th day)

wish to thank all who offered masses and prayers, messages of sympathy, kind thoughts, sent flowers and those who with their presence, shared with us the celebration of the gift of life of Jong. Most of all, we would like to thank his many friends and classmates who made us feel that Jong indeed has loved and is loved... Jong lives **here.**

HASTA LA VISTA, JONG!

"I am the resurrection and life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever believes in Me will never die." **John 11:25-26**

CLASSIFIEDS

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Quezon City

2 April 2004

ANNOUNCEMENT

TO ALL RICE BASED FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS (FOS) INTERESTED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RICE IMPORTATION PROGRAM FOR 2004:

BE INFORMED THAT THE FIRST 50% OF THE REGIONAL ALLOCATIONS DIVIDED EQUALLY AMONG FOS LICENSED BY NFA AS IMPORTERS AS OF MARCH 15, 2004, ARE AS FOLLOWS:

REGION	NUMBER OF LICENSED FOS	ALLOCATION PER FO IN METRIC TON
NCR	1	728.50
ILOCOS REGION	46	314.04
CAGAYAN VALLEY	4	1,500.00
CENTRAL LUZON	37	586.07
SOUTHERN TAGALOG	12	1,154.75
BICOL REGION	3	1,500.00
WESTERN VISAYAS	2	1,500.00
CENTRAL VISAYAS	0	0
EASTERN VISAYAS	1	1,500.00
WESTERN MINDANAO	5	1,302.00
NORTHERN MINDANAO	2	1,500.00
SOUTHERN MINDANAO	17	563.47
CENTRAL MINDANAO	33	268.20
ARMM	325	20.56

OUT OF THE REMAINING 50% OF THE REGIONAL ALLOCATIONS, 140.190 MT ARE OPEN ON A FIRST-COME-FIRST-SERVED BASIS TO QUALIFIED FOS WITHIN THE REGION SUBJECT TO PROVISIONS OF MEMO CIRCULAR AO-2K3-12-002 DATED JANUARY 13, 2004.

FOR BOTH ALLOCATIONS, FOS SHALL HAVE UNTIL APRIL 30, 2004 TO OPEN/AVAIL LETTERS OF CREDIT AND/OR OTHER FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS. OTHERWISE, THEIR ALLOCATION SHALL BE FORFEITED, POOLED AND BE OPENED/MADE AVAILABLE ON A FIRST-COME-FIRST-SERVED BASIS THROUGH THE NATIONAL POOL/ALLOCATION TO FOS NATIONWIDE.

THE TOTAL MAXIMUM VOLUME OF 1,500 MT PER FO WILL CONTINUE TO BE APPLICABLE AND THOSE WHO HAVE ALREADY AVAILED OF THE MAXIMUM VOLUME ARE NO LONGER ENTITLED TO IMPORT FOR THE CURRENT YEAR.

FOR STRICT COMPLIANCE.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. ARTHUR C. YAP**
Administrator

(PDI-April 7, 2004)

National Power Corporation

April 5, 2004

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

(Amended Advertisement)

The National Power Corporation (NPC) of the Republic of the Philippines invites all interested contractors to register and apply for eligibility and to bid for the Erection and Stringing of Puerto Princesa - Roxas 138 kV Single Circuit Steel Tower Transmission Lines Project in Four (4) Schedules.

The works to be completed by the successful bidder shall consist of, but not limited to, construction of tower foundations, erecting and dressing of different types of tower structures including fabrication of lacking tower parts, installation and stringing of conductors and overhead ground wires, slope protection works and all other works necessary to complete the project.

The complete set of eligibility documents are available for issuance at the Bids and Contracts Services Department, Ground Floor, Building No. 1, National Power Corporation, Agham Road corner Quezon Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City 1104 with Tel/Fax No. 922-1622, upon presentation of Letter of Intent and current Contractor's License.
The Bidding requirements and schedule of activities are as follows:

CONTRACT NUMBER - LP05A006SI	
APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT Schedule I - P59,655,274.00 Schedule II - P63,910,377.00 Schedule III - P62,569,982.00 Schedule IV - P67,636,743.00	
Contractor's License and Registration Particulars Issued By the PCAB	For Schedules I, II, III & IV License : Category AAA - Electrical Works Registration : Large B - Electrical Works
Issuance of Eligibility Documents	March 22 - April 14, 2004
Deadline for submission of Eligibility Requirements/Documents	April 15, 2004, 9:30 AM at Kanao Room, Solarium NPC
Issuance of Tender Documents	April 28, 2004
Pre-bid Conference	May 14, 2004
Submission and Opening of Bids	May 28, 2004
Contract Duration	Three Hundred (300) calendar days per schedule
Cost of Eligibility Documents	P1,000.00 (Non-refundable)
Cost of Tender/Bid Documents	P5,000.00 (Non-refundable)

Eligibility of prospective bidders shall be evaluated based on a non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria prescribed in the eligibility documents. Tender/bid documents shall be issued only to eligible bidders.

The Contracts Award Committee (CAC), NPC, reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, and to cancel the bidding process and reject all bids, at any time prior to award of contract, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder(s) or any obligation to inform the affected bidder(s) of the ground(s) for NPC's action.

(Sgd.) **SILVANO C. ZANORIA**
SVP, ME & TMS and
Chairman, Contracts Award Committee

(PDI - April 7, 2004)

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

AD NO. MMD-TRANSCO 2004-019

PD Ref No.: P-03-0932 / PR No.: NCCP-03-003328

1. The **NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION, BIDS AND AWARD COMMITTEE (TRANSCO - BAC) - HEAD OFFICE**, invites local bidders / contractors to apply for eligibility who are:
   a. Duly licensed Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships; or
   b. Partnership duly organized under the laws of the Philippines and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the interest belongs to citizens of the Philippines; or
   c. Corporations duly organized under the laws of the Philippines, and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the outstanding capital stock belongs to citizens of the Philippines; or
   d. Manufacturers, suppliers and/or distributors forming themselves into a joint venture, i.e., group of two (2) or more manufacturers, suppliers and/or distributors that intend to be jointly and severally responsible or liable for a particular contract: Provided, however, That Filipino ownership or interest of the joint venture concerned shall be at least sixty percent (60%); or
   e. Cooperatives duly registered with the Cooperatives Development Authority (CDA).
2. Procurement of Supply, Installation & Test of Fire Protection for NCC Building
3. The contract to be performed by the successful bidder shall consist of **Supply, Installation and testing of the Fire Pumping System, Outdoor/Indoor Water hydrant System, piping System, Portable Fire Extinguisher, Automatic Water Sprinkler System, Total Gas Flooding Fire Protection System and Fire Alarm System.**
   The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to be Bid is **P13,033,316.00** to be sourced from **Internal Cash Generation (ICG)**.
4. The Bid Documents will be available for issuance starting **March 26 to April 26, 2004** at The BAC Secretariat Office, National Transmission Corporation, Materials Management Division (MMD), Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City upon payment of non-refundable fee of **Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00)** per set.
5. Pre-Bid Conference will be held on **April 15, 2004** at **2:00 p.m.** at the Admin Conference Room, G/F TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City.
6. Deadline for submission, receipt and opening of bids shall be on or before **2:00 p.m.** of **April 27, 2004** at the Admin Conference Room, Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Ave. cor. BIR Rd., Diliman, Quezon City. If the date falls on a non-working day or declared non-working day, the deadline for submission shall be moved to the next working day immediately following said date. Late submission and/or incomplete application shall not be accepted.
7. All particulars relative to the eligibility, bidding, evaluation of bids and award of contract shall be governed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations-A of Republic Act 9184.
8. TransCo reserves the right to reject any Application for Eligibility or all bids without offering any reasons, waive any required formality therein, and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the government.
9. Additional information shall be furnished upon request. All communications should be addressed to the undersigned at the aforementioned address.

(Sgd.) **ANTONIO G. LABAYANI**
Chairman, Bids and Award Committee

(PDI - March 27 & April 7, 2004)

May 10, 2004
National and Local Elections

MAUNDY THURSDAY – April 8, 2004 and
GOOD FRIDAY – April 9, 2004

CAMPAIGNING IS PROHIBITED

A reminder from the Commission on Elections

ANNOUNCEMENT

In observance of the Holy Week, **INQUIRER** branch offices will be closed on Holy Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Black Saturday.

However, to serve your advertising needs, our Megamall branch will open today, Holy Wednesday and Black Saturday, 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION

Notice is hereby given that the Amended Articles of Incorporation of CORPORATE INFORMATION SOLUTIONS INTERNATIONAL, INC. (the "Corporation") which shortened the term of its corporate existence to end on April 30, 2004 and hereby dissolving the said corporation on said date, has been approved by its Board of Directors and shareholders at duly constituted meetings both held on March 2, 2004.

All persons having claims against said corporation are requested to present same at the Corporation's principal place of business located at the Computer Services Building, Meralco Center, Ortigas Avenue, Pasig City.

This announcement will serve as notice to all concerned of the legal dissolution of the aforesaid corporation.

(Sgd.) **RAUL G. CORALDE**
Corporate Secretary

(PDI April 7, 14 & 21, 2004)

SM CINEMA

SM Dial-A-Movie 833-9999

NOW SHOWING

Central

SM MEGAMALL 6331901

1 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 50 FIRST DATES
3 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
5 SCOOBY DOO 2
6 HIDALGO
7 BUTTERFLY EFFECT
8 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
9 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
10 PETER PAN
11 OTSO OTSO
12 HOSTILE INTENT

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 9350749

1 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
2 KASIPING
3 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
5 OTSO-OTSO
6 HIDALGO
7 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
8 PETER PAN
9 50 FIRST DATES
10 SCOOBY DOO 2
11 GOTHIKA
12 THE GRUDGE 2

SM CITY MANILA 5239240

1 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 BUTTERFLY EFFECT
3 PETER PAN
4 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
5 SCOOBY DOO 2
6 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
7 HIDALGO
8 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
9 OTSO-OTSO
10 THE GRUDGE 2
11 DONT' TEMPT ME
12 50 FIRST DATES

SM CITY NORTH EDSA 9295452

1 OTSO OTSO
2 SCOOBY DOO 2.
3 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4 50 FIRST DATES
5 DUDA / DOUBT
6 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
7 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
8 PETER PAN

SM CITY STA. MESA 7149522 • 7161416

1 OTSO-OTSO
2 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
3 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4 SCOOBY DOO 2
5 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
6 HIDALGO
7 PETER PAN
8 50 FIRST DATES
9 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
10 BUTTERFLY EFFECT

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN 2514302

1 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
3 OTSO-OTSO
4 SCOOBY DOO 2

North

SM CITY MARILAO (044) 933 2013 to 17

1 BONE SNATCHER
2 WATER DEMON
3 OTSO-OTSO
4 SCOOBY DOO 2

SM CITY PAMPANGA 7128015

1 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
3 50 FIRST DATES
4 SCOOBY DOO 2
5 BUTTERFLY EFFECT
6 OTSO-OTSO

SM CITY BAGUIO (074) 4464505

1 TORQUE
2 PETER PAN
3 DUPLEX
4 SCOOBY DOO 2

South

SM CITY LAS PIÑAS 8066888

1 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
2 PETER PAN
3 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4 50 FIRST DATES
5 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
6 BUTTERFLY EFFECT
7 SCOOBY DOO 2
8 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
9 HIDALGO
10 OTSO OTSO

SM CITY BICUTAN 7763055

1 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 PETER PAN
3 SCOOBY DOO 2
4 PASSION OF THE CHRIST

SM SUPER CENTER SUCAT 8294975

1 OTSO-OTSO
2 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
3 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4 HOUSE OF THE DEAD

SM CITY BACOOR (046)4173868

1 THE GRUDGE 2
2 PETER PAN
3 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4 OTSO-OTSO
5 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
6 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
7 50 FIRST DATES
8 SCOOBY DOO 2

SM CITY LUCENA (042) 7108977-80

1 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
2 MEMENTO MORI
3 HAUNTED OFFICE
4 OTSO-OTSO

Visayas & Mindanao

SM CITY CEBU (032) 2313676

1 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 PASSION IF THE CHRIST
3 SCOOBY DOO 2
4 TOTALLY BLONDE
5 HIDALGO
6 KARIBAL
7 OTSO-OTSO
8 PASSION OF THE CHRIST

SM CITY ILOILO (033) 3209422

1 NIGHTMARE
2 RESERVED
3 SCOOBY DOO 2
4 TORQUE
5 GOTHIKA
6 LOVE ACTUALLY
7 RESERVED
8 BONE SNATCHER

SM CITY DAVAO (082) 2976958

1 HIDALGO
2 RING: THE SPIRAL
3 OTSO-OTSO
4 LOVE ACTUALLY
5 TORQUE
6 SCOOBY DOO 2

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO (088) 8592884

1 HIDALGO
2 OTSO OTSO
3 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
4 TORQUE

—THE PODIUM

1
THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
12:56 FS/1:20 MF/4:00/ 8:50LFS/ 9:20 LMF/ 11:30 END

2
THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
11:00 FS/11:20 MF/ 2:00/4:40/ 7:20/ 9:30 LFS/ 10:00 LMF/12:10 END

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1 HOUSE OF THE DEAD	1 PETER PAN	ArtFilm 1 PETER PAN 12:10 2:30 4:50 7:10 9:30	THX 1 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST (guaranteed seats)	THX 1 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	2 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	2 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	THX 2 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST (guaranteed seats)	2 PETER PAN
3 PETER PAN	THX 3 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST (guaranteed seats)	REPERTORY'S CAUGHT IN THE NET April 16, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25 & 30	3 50 FIRST DATES 1:30 3:30 5:30 7:30 9:30 11:30 (guaranteed seats)	3 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	4 DON'T TEMPT ME		4 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	4 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
	5 SCOOBY DOO		5 PETER PAN (guaranteed seats)	5 SCOOBY-DOO 2
	6 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST			
	7 50 FIRST DATES			

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Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA (Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 50 FIRST DATE
3 TAKING LIVES
4 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
5 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
6 TAKING LIVES
7 PETER PAN
8 SCOOBY DOO-2
9 UNINVITED
10 PETER PAN

EASTWOOD CINEMAS (Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
3 TAKING LIVES
4 PETER PAN

Masagana CINEMA (Pasay) tel 833.3290 . 833.3274
1 GRUDGE-2
2 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
3 PUNLA

starmall Movies www.clickthecity.com.ph (Mandaluyong) tel 724.4986
1 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
2 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
3 TAKING LIVES
PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
5

METROPOLIS star www.clickthecity.com.ph (Alabang) tel 850.4285
1 VENUS
2 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
3 TAKING LIVES
4 UNINVITED
5 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
6 PETER PAN

M star www.clickthecity.com.ph (Las Pinas) tel 873.5004
1 SCOOBY DOO-2
2 VENUS

PREMIERE CINEMA THX (Makati City) tel 892.2503

Centre Plaza Cinema (Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 SHIRI
2 GOTHIKA

Sunshine (FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376
1
2
3
4

GOTESCO CINEMA

Gotesco City (Manila) tel 734.8588
5 RESERVE
6
7
8
9

Gotesco Grand Central (Caloocan) tel 364.3781
1 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
2 PETER PAN
3 UNINVITED
4 TAKING LIVES
5 RESERVE
6 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
7 RESERVE
8 OTSO OTSO
9 KARIBAL

Gotesco Commonwealth tel 951.0083
1 RESERVE
2
3
4
5

Gotesco Ortigas tel 656.6795
1 HIGHWAY MEN
2 OTSO OTSO
3 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
4 KASIPING
5 SCOOBY DOO-2

Universal (Manila) tel 733.2470
1 RESERVE

Dilson (Manila) tel 734.7724
Dilson THE LOVER
Lords GOOD LAWYERS WIFE

Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 UNINVITED
3 TAKING LIVES
4 PETER PAN

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto SUPER CINERAMA tel 733.4238
1 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 PETER PAN
3 UNINVITED
4 TAKING LIVES
5 RESERVE

Berma Cinema (Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 PASSION OF CHRIST
2 OTSO OTSO

THE CENTER OF ENTERTAINMENT Araneta Center — Ali MALL CINEPLEX 7
1 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
2 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
3 PASSION OF CHRIST
4 TAKING LIVES
5 PETER PAN
6 HOUSE
7 HOUSE OF THE DEAD

Jade Cinema (Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 PASSION OF CHRIST
2 DON'T TEMPT ME
3 PASSION OF CHRIST
4 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN

Cine Nepo (Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121
1 WISE GIRL
2 PASSION OF CHRIST
3 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
4 PASSION OF CHRIST

Cine Nepo (Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8489
1 OTSO OTSO
2 GRUDGE-2
3 50 FIRST DATE
4 TORQUE

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall (Sta. Rosa, Laguna) tel (049) 837.0926
1 PASSION OF CHRIST
2 TAKING LIVES
3 PETER PAN

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 THE GRUDGE-2
2 TAKING LIVES
3 PASSION OF CHRIST
4 PETER PAN

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall (Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146
1 THE GRUDGE-2
2 PETER PAN
3 PASSION OF CHRIST
4 TAKING LIVES

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix (Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 50 FIRST DATE
2 TORQUE
3 GHOST HOUSE

Cinema 2000 Metrotown (Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1
2 50 FIRST DATE
3 THE GATHERING
4 SCOOBY DOO-2

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Plaridel) tel (044) 795-3320
1 SCOOBY DOO-2
2 HIDALGO
3 GHOST HOUSE

Lianas Cinema (Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
2 KARIBAL
3 VENUS
4

Lianas MovieCity (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 PETER PAN
2 VENUS
3 PASSION OF CHRIST
4 TAKING LIVES
5 THE CURSE

Olivarez Tri-Cinema (Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883
1 PASSION OF CHRIST
2 TAKING LIVES

Olivarez Los Baños tel (049) 249.2558
1 PASSION OF CHRIST
2 TAKING LIVES
3

Mega Center Mall (Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283
1 OTSO OTSO
2 BUFALLO
3 HAUNTED OFFICE
4 SCOOBY DOO-2

Cabuyao (Laguna City) tel 520.8914
1 RESERVE

Fiesta World Mall (Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 DON'T TEMPT ME
2 GRUDGE-2
3 HIDALGO
4 TAKING LIVES

Emperor (Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657
1 BIGLANG LIKO
2 GHOST HOUSE

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Cinema 1	Cinema 2
PETER PAN Screening Time 11:30 am/1:40 pm/3:50 pm 6:00 pm/8:10 pm/10:20 pm Rating : GP	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST Screening Time 12:30 pm/3:30 pm/5:30 pm 8:00 pm/10:30 pm Rating : PG - 13
Cinema 3	**Cinema 4**
THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST Screening Time 11:45 am/2:15 pm/4:45 pm 7:15 pm/9:45 pm Rating : PG - 13	SCOOBY-DOO 2 Screening Time 11:35 am/ 1:40 pm/3:45 pm 5:50 pm/7:55 pm/10:00 pm Rating : GP

* All screening schedules are subject to change without prior notice

For Inquires, please call:
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People, Events & Products

E-mail: pr_pep@inquirer.com.ph
aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Aries Espinosa

Starcom Philippines takes stand on responsible voting

A LOCAL TV and radio commercial on responsible voting has recently created as much impact among Filipinos as the individual political advertisements of different candidates.

The 45-second television commercial shows an employer interviewing an applicant who seeks to be a janitor. By comparing the scrutiny given to him for an easy entry-level job to the most important occupation in the country, the ad is geared towards cutting through all the political endorsement ads and election news hoopla.

Produced by Starcom Philippines, the TVC, sans the usual sound effects and background music, provides an unbiased, objective point of view, and a point of focus amid all the partisan materials people see and hear everyday.

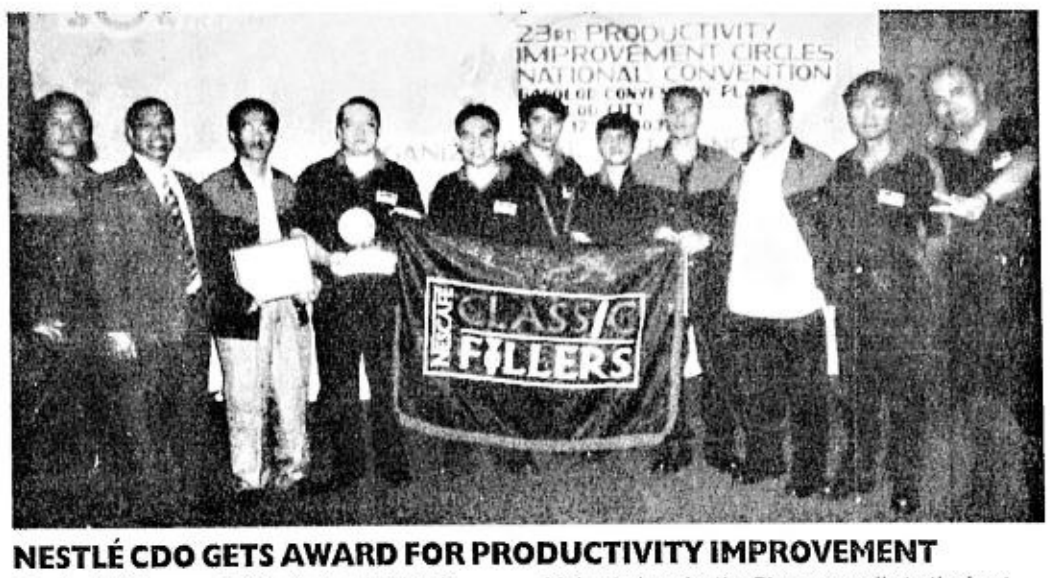
A radio commercial was also produced to strengthen Starcom's election advocacy campaign.

Specifically, the ads were created to encourage people to be wiser and more discriminating about their vote. This is in line with Starcom's thrust of providing quality information not only to its clients but to society as well.

"In these crucial times when Filipinos prepare to choose a leader, Starcom Philippines has taken the initiative to promote informative advertising for the benefit of the electorate," said Starcom managing director Lizelle Maralag.

"We strongly believe that the Filipino not only has the right to vote but, more importantly, the right of free choice, a right which is possible only if there is free flow of information and a well-informed citizenry. Thus, these advocacy ads," she added.

A leading media specialist, Starcom Philippines considers the provision of information to society at large as a social responsibility that will make a positive difference in the country.



NESTLÉ CDO GETS AWARD FOR PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENT

The Nestlé Cagayan de Oro Factory's Classic Fillers Team won this year's Gold Award of the Productivity Improvement Circles Association of the Philippines (Picap) for its outstanding quality circle project that reduced the filler machine downtime at the factory's Coffee Filling and Packing Line No. 6 by 75 percent. The award is the highest given by the Picap annually to the best quality project in each of three major categories: production, non-production and team. The awarding was held during the 23rd Productivity Improvement Circles National Convention in Bacolod City, with the theme 'Organizational Excellence Through People Involvement'.

TOUCH MOBILE'S CELLE-BABAD PROMO WINNER

Nestor Ocampo (right), a 44-year-old ophthalmologist from Lemery, Batangas, and his family receive the key to a brand-new house and lot in Sta. Catalina Village in Dasmarinas, Cavite from Johnny Bondoc (left), Touch Mobile's head of usage and loyalty, for winning the grand prize in "Celle-babad Promo ng Touch Mobile. The promo, which was open to Touch Mobile subscribers who made chargeable voice calls from April 21 to June 15, 2003, is in line with Touch Mobile's thrust of bringing Filipino families together and keeping them connected at all times, as well as its way of expressing gratitude to its loyal subscribers.

GLOBE RECEIVES GOLD QUILL AWARDS

Globe Telecom bagged the award for excellence for publication design for its magazine The Globe Spectrum, and Icon: The Globe Employee portal was given the Gold Quill Award of merit for electronic and interactive communication in the recently concluded Gold Quill Awards Philippines 2004 of the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) Philippines. Receiving the awards from IABC board director Rey Anthony David (right) are Globe senior vice president for corporate and regulatory affairs Rodolfo Salalima (left), Globe corporate communications head Cynthia Evidente and Globe public relations head Jones Campos.

CALTEX MENTOR PROGRAM IN QC

The flagship project of the Caltex Drive Team Volunteers, the Caltex Mentor Program (CMP), held the recognition ceremony of the mentoring sessions for 'students at risk' of Valencia Elementary School Oct. 11 at the school grounds. It was the first time the program was introduced in Quezon City, and partnered with a civic organization the Rotary Club of Valencia. Out of the 86 students who availed themselves of the program, 76 were turned into readers. The mentoring activity in Reading was in line with CMP's goal in addressing the alarming rate of non-readers in public elementary schools. Apart from the financial sponsorship of the school, Caltex Philippines Inc has also provided training for the 24 volunteer-mentors on the proper techniques of teaching Reading and English. Shown are the Valencia graduates of the CMP expressing their appreciation to the mentoring program.

Free business seminars for OFWs, families, kin

A SERIES of free seminars on setting up and operating a business will be staged for overseas Filipinos worldwide (OFWs) and their families to enable them to use their investable funds productively and profitably while preventing them from getting victimized by pyramid scams.

The seminars form part of an international trade show being organized by OFWNet Foundation, an umbrella organization formed by more than 1,000 OFW leaders based in various parts of the world.

Slated at the SM Megatrade Hall 3 in Mandaluyong City from April 16 to 18, the 2nd OFW Trade Show & Seminar will teach former and present OFWs and their families the basic steps in setting up a business, the different business models and existing markets, the financial requirements, and the vital entrepreneurial network and corporate linkages, including franchising, among many others.

"The special topic on franchising is based on the peculiar situation of our 8 million OFWs who need the safest possible business for their hard-earned capital, and which their families can manage effectively through a tested formula and experienced guidance," said Norman Gacula, president of OFWNet's business arm OFW International Holdings Corp.

"Many other potential businesses for OFWs will be demonstrated in the three-day show and seminar, which is open to the public for free," Gacula added.

Seminar topics include Pagnenegosyo 101/Entrepreneurship Basic, How to Start a Business, Kalayaan sa Kakapusan, Building Successful Business Plans, Franchising for First Time Entrepreneurs, various entrepreneurship case studies, and business presentations by reputable firms and industry experts.

Those interested to attend the seminars may register now with event manager Fiera de Manila as seats are limited to only 200 participants daily. Fiera de Manila can be reached at 896-0639/37, 899-6893, fax 896-0637, 890-2101, or e-mail fiera@info.com.ph, or visit www.fmi.com.ph.

The participants will also be able to see many different business models and product exhibits.

The exhibitors include The Professional Group/Future First, Digitalfilipino.com, Bright Homes Realty, Inkman Ventures, Lavandera Ko, Empire East Land Holdings, Pacific Plans, SeaOil, Earth+Style, Tgraf, Sun Life Financial, Ayala Life Assurance Inc, Filinvest Land Inc, Federal Land, ATT Aqua Treatment Technology Inc, and Asia Pacific Caregiver & Healthcare Training Center;

Pizzito, Mobile Car Wash, Global Digital Campus, Crown Asia, Insular Life, Graficad Creation, NTT Feloow Co Inc, Stateland, Philamlife, Well-Family Maternity Clinic, Western Union Money Transfer, Dolmar Realty Ventures, TNT Worldwide Express, Nacho King, and Informatics Philippines, with Overseas Pinoy TV, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Manila Times, and OFW Hour as media partners.

Interested exhibitors may also contact Fiera de Manila for inquiries or reservations.

The exhibit caters to the country's OFWs numbering around 8 million and their families totaling an estimated 40 million, now comprising a collectively powerful economic sector.

A taste of Mexico

DISCOVER the delights of a truly Mexican experience at Tia Maria's. The place looks good, feels good and the food dares to be different. It offers a wide array of Mexican dishes whose diversity will astound a first-timer to the restaurant. Top of the Mexican food list are Chicken Fajitas, Nachos Grandes, Quesadillas, Taquitos, Flautas and Mexican Paella.

Aside from its ambience and choice of food, customer service is excellent, the staff possess that unique blend of friendliness and professionalism that distinguish fine dining restaurants.

Recently, Tia Maria's opened a new concept restaurant at SM in Baguio City. It is more modern, utilizes efficient use of space without sacrificing its coziness, an attribute the restaurant is known for, an ambience that makes the restaurant retain loyalty from its guests. The new restaurant in Baguio is also blessed with one of the most fantastic views overlooking the city and its environs. Who wouldn't want to enjoy one of Tia Maria's Zombies or Margaritas al fresco while waiting to be served with an excellent meal?

Remodeling of all Tia Maria's restaurants is in the pipeline.

Tia Maria's Catering Service is also fast gaining popularity. It has streamlined its food line to offer a few but tasty Mexican cuisine with its different tastes and textures. There is almost no end to the spicy or mild concoctions devised by Tia Maria's, subject, of course, to minor adjustments as required by the client. Each menu is carefully planned by the staff to give contrast and variety based on the client's choice and budget.

Aside from the food, a Mexican party experience includes uniformed staff, tables, chairs, linen, glassware, cutlery, balloons, décor, flower arrangements and individual table centerpieces, piñatas, party favors, and Mexican music.

For catering services, call 371-1473 or 0916-3184236.

Catering seminar set

PROACTIVE Center for Training (PACT) will hold a Managing a Catering Business Seminar Workshop from April 12 to 21 (excluding weekends) from 12 noon to 5 p.m. at Ipanema Bar and Restaurant, 2nd level Eastwood City Walk, Eastwood City, Libis, Quezon City. The workshop is open to all caterers, food executives and other entrepreneurs who are planning to open a catering business. The 8-day training will feature lectures and hands-on workshops on legal requirements, planning the menu, equipment and staffing, cost control, room arrangements, napkin folding and table skirting. Reservations are being accepted on a first-come-first-served basis at 687-1787 or 0916-8226053.

Clips

CD Technologies Asia promo

CD TECHNOLOGIES Asia Inc, the pioneering company which produced Lex Libris, the most comprehensive and advanced source of legal research material on CD-ROM and Lex Libris On-line, customized databasing service, professionally authored and engineered with Folio Views software from NextPage Corp, USA celebrates its 10th anniversary with the Lex Libris Grand Sale. CD-ROMs on laws, taxation and jurisprudence (9 volumes) are now priced at 70 percent off and other Lex Libris titles such as "Impeachment Proceedings Against President Joseph Estrada", "Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas" and many other useful and important titles are now offered at 50 percent off. The anniversary promo also offers free titles to its updated clients. This promo period is ongoing until April 15. Interested parties may log on to www.cdasia.com.ph or call its main office at 634-7141 to 42 or fax queries to 634-7140.

Easter at Power Plant Mall

READY to treat the kids to the grandest Easter revelry in town? Power Plant Mall at Rockwell is, and it has planned something extra special. No less than 400 fluffy bunnies will be given away at Independent Lifestyles at the 2nd level (beside Nullah). Starting at 10 a.m. on Easter Sunday, the first 400 customers who present a single minimum purchase worth at least P500 from any Mall establishment will go home with a new pet bunny. What's more, every corner of Power Plant Mall will be bustling with activity. Starting at the North Court, pre-registered kids 12 years old and below will be thrilled with magic tricks, a puppet show, jugglers, games, a world-champion Yoyo master and an Egg Hunt at participating establishments. Pre-registration for activities at the North Court is ongoing until April 7. Activities open to the public at the South Court include a face painter, kiddie salon, glitter and henna tattoo, bubble show, balloon twisting, cookie painting Easter goodies and baskets, cottin candies and more. This Power Plant Mall Easter bunny delight is also made possible with the special participation of Themes and Motifs and Cadbury.

7th President's Cup gathers club VIPs

THE BIGWIGS of the Tagaytay Midlands Golf Club Inc came in full force to join the excitement as participants competed in the country's first major golf event, the 7th President's Cup, held March 20. Tagaytay Midlands, where the President's Cup was held, is the second championship golf course developed by Belle Corp chaired by Benito Tan Guat, with Willy Ocier and Hans Sy Sr as vice chair. The President's Cup is one of a series of exclusive treats at the Highlands this summer to provide its members with unique and diverse entertainment experiences, says Annabelle Ong, director for marketing and membership services. Other activities include the Members Monthly Medal Golf Challenge held every last Saturday of the month. For membership inquiries and other details, call 687-2885.

DOST-PCASTRD accepting applications

THE PHILIPPINE Council for Advanced Science and Technology Research and Development (PCASTRD), an agency of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), is now accepting applications for its master's and PhD scholarship programs for SY 2004-2005. The PCASTRD scholarship is open to Filipino citizens of good health, with bachelor's or master's degree, good scholastic record with a GPA of 80 and above, not more than 40 years old, who have not availed themselves of a PCASTD scholarship grant for the same degree, and who don't have any existing scholarship grant. Applicants are advised to check the availability of programs of choice in respective accredited universities at the PCASTRD website (www.pcastrd.dost.gov.ph) by clicking Services> Human Resource Development Program> Local Graduate Degree. For further inquiries, call the human resources and institution development division at 837-7516, 837-7522 or 837-2071 to 82 local 2101. Deadline for submission of applications is on April 15.

PEOPLE at WORK

E-mail: peopleatwork@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Raul O. Marcelo
Subsection Editor Regina Galang Reyes

E-mail criticizing manager triggers whirlwind of conflict

CEO mentor Gozon

By Atty. Felipe L. Gozon
President and CEO
GMA Network, Inc.

HI! I just want to share an experience about my current problem in work. I am an Operations and Maintenance Engineer at one of the wireless telecommunication companies here in our country.

It all started with an e-mail containing some of our grievances on our present system of management. This is regarding in particular how a certain manager handles his people and problems at work. This e-mail was circulated among members of our group and many aired their grievances but not directing the issues to the people concerned. It was sort of a "stray bullet" which was fired with no concern for those who were hit.

When the concerned manager got hold of the e-mail, he burst into anger and answered bitterly to the issues that were written. He said that we are blaming all issues to him and that he was being judged by a "kangaroo court" as he described it. He told us "he cannot accept the criticism constructively and that he will definitely bring it to his grave."

I myself was surprised by his attitude because a leader or manager should not act that way. He kept on mentioning about practicing professionalism but he is doing otherwise, threatening those who try to comment and intimidating others. He sulks to the extent that all those who participated in the polemic exchanges on the e-mail were branded as anti-management and unprofessional. Until now, he can't accept the method and medium of airing grievances; it's unprecedented and untimely. He claimed that we should have talked to him about it. But if this had been done unto his liking, would he consider it a professional airing?

ASK YOUR CEO

Some of us already did talk to him about our clamor but what he did was to personally assault them and suppress their right to voice out issues concerning his style of management. We are still in shock and in the hot seat up to this very moment. He has tried to portray that we made a very big mistake. We can't even speak to him. We didn't expect this worst reaction from him as we had put a high regard on his position as manager. What should we do to end this conflict?

Worried Guy

Some people cannot take criticism, even constructive ones, whose purpose is to improve the efficiency and relationships in the workplace.

Your manager must have been guilty of the criticisms circulated through the e-mail in your division/department as a "stray bullet." He readily felt that he was the target thereof. Instead of accepting his shortcomings (if the criticisms were true), and try to improve his management style, his reaction was to be angry and to bitterly answer the issues raised in the e-mail. This is not good because he will just try to prove that what he's doing is correct and all those who criticized him were wrong. A lot of emotion and time will be spent on this effort resulting in inefficiency, breakdown of moral, etc. in your division/department.

I agree with you that this is no way for a manager to act. Of course, there are criticisms made in good faith and in bad faith or maliciously. I assume that the criticisms which your manager thought were directed at him were made in good faith.

I cannot advise you to privately talk with your manager since some of you who already did so were "assaulted" by him and were "suppressed" from articulating issues concerning his management style.

If your manager reports to a higher senior officer in your company, perhaps some of you should seek an appointment with this senior officer and apprise him of your problems in your division/department and/or with your manager. Just be sure to clarify at the outset that your purpose is not to discredit your manager but to improve the efficiency, working relationships, moral, etc. in your division/department.

In GMA-7, we have placed suggestion boxes in the elevator lobbies and in our employees' canteen. Anyone, even a visitor to our complex, can drop his/her suggestion, comment or criticism about our company, our programs, officers, etc. I personally read and act on them. Some of the suggestions which we found to be sound are now being implemented.

If you do not wish to meet with the senior officer to whom your manager reports, you may recommend that a similar system of getting feedback from employees, etc. by your Chief Executive Officer and/or Chief Operating Officer be adopted by your company. Best wishes.

(Our CEO columnists can answer requests for career advice through this column. Send your request by postal mail to People at Work Editor, PDI Bldg., Chino Roces Ave., Makati City 1200 or e-mail peopleatwork@inquirer.com.ph.)

Museum volunteers bring us back to the past

By Candy G. Villanueva

WHEN was the last time you paid a visit to one of our museums? Chances are, most of you would say, in your last high school history class field trip.

Sadly neglected, nobody pays much attention anymore to these houses of art, treasure and heritage.

Our museums display the blueprint of who we were in the past and therefore, generally dictates who we are now and who we will be. As Ambeth Ocampo, historian and columnist, puts it, "History and the past are the base from which you spring. Without a good take off you will never fly."

Although most people would rather spend their weekends relaxing in movie theaters or wandering aimlessly in crowded malls, the Museum Volunteers of the Philippines (MVP) hopes to change the people's course of interest. Composed of individuals from many different parts of the world as well as the Philippines, the MVP works to promote Philippine culture and to aid in the awareness of the importance of museums in nation building.

SONIA Krug

RUDY ESPERAS

Diverse members

It may seem ironic that foreign people would like to promote local culture. Surprising as it may seem, the MVP is composed of some 230 members representing some 34 nationalities. A mixed bag of people, the organization is a "wealth of talent and intelligence that is available anytime to anyone," as Sonia Krug, MVP President puts it.

As to why foreigners would be interested in Philippine culture, Sonia simply explains that people generally would like to know something about where they live, albeit temporarily. Away from home, foreigners have a curiosity for the places in which they find themselves.

In a strange and new environment, one adapts by trying to demystify the place's culture, traditions and beliefs. And according to Sonia, the museum is a boundless source for education.

How it began

In 1982, several foreigners and Filipino women got together to provide assistance in the areas of conservation, conchology, botany, ethnology, photography and restoration to the National Museum of the Philippines. They also helped in assessing the bones and shards stored in the museum. With the help and encouragement of the National Museum's Dr. Jesus Peralta, Curator of Anthropology, and Mr. Artemio "Timie" Barbosa, Head of Ethnology, the Museum Volunteers of the Philippines was born.

An independent non-profit organization, MVP aims to "encourage an appreciation and understanding of the culture, art, and history of the Philippines, while examining its relationships to its Asian neighbors." This goal is basically achieved by providing volunteer assistance to museums and places of history throughout the country.

Study programs

These volunteers with diverse backgrounds and beliefs are bonded together by one thing: a passion to learn about the Philippines—its history, people, and culture.

From September through March, for the past several years MVP has presented weekly sessions on what amounts to an introduction to Philippine history, culture, and art. This series has included participant's research and reports, guest lecturers, and field trips.

Smaller groups of 15 to 25 meet regularly to learn about one particular area of study. A participant researches one phase of the topic, reports on it, most often with the use of visuals through slides or an overhead projector. Guest speakers and field trips may be included. The idea is to learn something new, share it, and have a good time while doing it. Recent study group topics have included "Textiles of the Philippines," "Architecture of the Philippines: Religious and Secular," and "The Silk Road" with emphasis on Central Asia. Many strong and enduring friendships have grown out of these groups. A library and slide library aid members in their research and presentation.

Open to public

Monthly lectures held every third Friday of every month are open to the public. Recent lectures have been on the "Petroglyphs of Angono" by Dr. Jesus Peralta of the National Museum and Attitudes and Lifestyle of Mindanao's Muslims by Mercedes "Mercy" Abad. This month's talk features Jose Mari Perez Trenas, who will focus on northern Philippine figurative sculptures, including granary and harvest gods, and ritual boxes.

After eight, evening sessions provide a time when working members and spouses can join in. Most sharing are interactive. A recent talk by Guillermo Gomez Rivera on relations between the Chinese and Filipinos from before the Spanish period until the present was enhanced by photographs, music and dance. Christian Perez described and showed his collection of stereoviews of old Manila.

ALL ABOUT WORK

The MVP works hand in hand with different institutions such as the National Museum, the Metropolitan Museum and Ayala Museum. They also work with churches that have their own display galleries of arts and artifacts like San Agustin, Sto. Tomas Church, and the Dimiao Parish Church Museum in Bohol.

MVP has established a working relationship with school museums such as De La Salle University and Ateneo de Manila University. Members have assisted the American Historical Society, the National Historical Institute and the house-restaurant museum of La Cocina de Tita Moning.

Helping hands

As volunteers, members of the MVP research, photograph and document museum objects, and act as guides at various museums, both on a regular basis and for special exhibitions.

Presently, under strict supervision of qualified museum personnel, MVP members are involved in numerous activities at the National Museum. They are cleaning, mounting and labeling specimens in the herbarium. At the Anthropology Department, they help out in cross-indexing, cleaning, taking inventory and packing items. A delicate undertaking that requires patience and love, their commitment finds them cleaning and piecing together ceramic finds, preserving textiles and protecting and repairing old photographs, documents and book pages.

Requiring a bit of elbow grease as well, the work entails changing the alcohol needed in jars holding underwater specimens and fish, desalination and removal of coral pieces from large jars, matching and piecing together of shards, cleaning and cataloging of shells and even cleaning and maintenance of the library.

The National Museum staff conducts orientations twice a year open to everyone who would like to participate in their work programs. The MVP participants will tell you it is a wonderful way to learn and a fun way to make a worthwhile contribution.

Helping in nation building

Interestingly, many MVPs who are professionals in their own right don't mind getting their hands dirty on dust and artifact debris as long as they achieve their ultimate purpose. By embracing, preserving and promoting Philippine culture, they hope to contribute to the well-being either of their own country or their host country.

Mostly, they believe that they provide an avenue to aid in the development of the country. "MVP can help by pointing out and reinforcing the importance of protecting the rainforests, the animals, the coral beds and historical sites, " the MVP president explains.

They hope to achieve this by encouraging interest and curiosity for the country's houses of history. Museums, after all, define our roots. A museum is the repository of a country's history, a source where its citizens learn about their past and gain an appreciation of their present—and the first place to which a visitor turns for knowledge of the place in which he finds himself.

'I believe in you'

WORKING MOM

An Mercado Alcantara

ALL they did that hour was watch clouds roll by. It wasn't what most fathers and sons do, given some precious vacation time all to themselves, but that's just what they did. I watched them from a distance, Gio the little boy was on his dad's shoulders, his chin tilted up, his eyes squinting at the sky. His father looked just like him, his chin tilted up too, his eyes staring out to a spot in the sky.

I inched nearer to them, stared right out at the clouds, and looked for what it was that held them there. There was nothing I could see. But I heard the father say, "If you look hard enough, you can make it move."

Gio stared out even more intently, his concentration rippling his forehead. "I can't do it, Papa," he wailed. "Nothing's happening." And he let go of his gaze. Calmly, his father said: "That's because you're not focusing enough."

Making clouds move

Gio tried it again. His forehead furrowed, his eyes turned into slits, and he kept still. Then it happened. Gio's eyes opened wide, his jaw dropped, his arms flew up in triumph. "I did it!" he shouted. "I made the clouds move!"

"I always knew you could do it," his father said and then gently carried him back down to the ground. If I myself had not seen the clouds move, I know for sure I saw the soul of that child gather up, swell, and float out like a cloud.

I knew this moment was a precious gift. One that would shape the way this child would view the world as an adult. With just a few words, his father taught him that is belief in his son was enough for him to stir up clouds, move mountains, change the world.

Bonding moments

Never mind that the father was often away at work and that as the boy was growing up, business trips used to take his father away from him a lot. There were enough precious and genuine bonding moments that convinced Gio that because his father believed in him, he could do anything.

Crucial role

As parents, and most especially as mothers, we play a crucial role in instilling our children with the confidence that they could do whatever they set their mind to do.

Manfred F.R. Kets de Vries, a professor of Leadership Development at INSEAD in Fountainebleau, has said that after studying the life stories of many great leaders, he has observed that effective leaders are often born from adoring mothers. In fact he says, paraphrasing Freud, "there is nothing as conducive to success as being your mother's favorite."

Let's keep this in mind as we prepare to hang up our work hat for a few days to take our families on vacation this Holy Week. This is not only our chance to make up for the times we've spent at work instead of with our kids, this is also our chance to show our kids how deeply we believe in them.

Look for that precious few moments when you can stare at the clouds, walk hand in hand with your child, watch him swim on his own. Tell him gently that you always knew he could it. Convince him that he can be all that he wants to be because you will always believe in him.

Marian inspiration

Most of all, take inspiration from Mother Mary, as she was so powerfully portrayed in the movie "The Passion of the Christ." I have not seen the movie myself (I'm a coward, too frightened to see my Lord suffer), but friends who have seen it tell me it is the example of Mama Mary that affected them the most. So powerful was her belief in her Son and His mission that she was able to endure watching him suffer so. May our love for our children propel them to see that behind every fall is a chance to get up again, behind every death there is a new resurrection. Happy Easter!

(An Mercado-Alcantara is founding editor of Working Mom magazine published by ABS-CBN Publishing, Inc. For more tips, get this month's issue with Bea Lucero and Christine Jacobs on the cover. You may reach her at an_alcantara@abs.pinoycentral.com.)

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7, 2004

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

2bU • To be you!

LIFESTYLE

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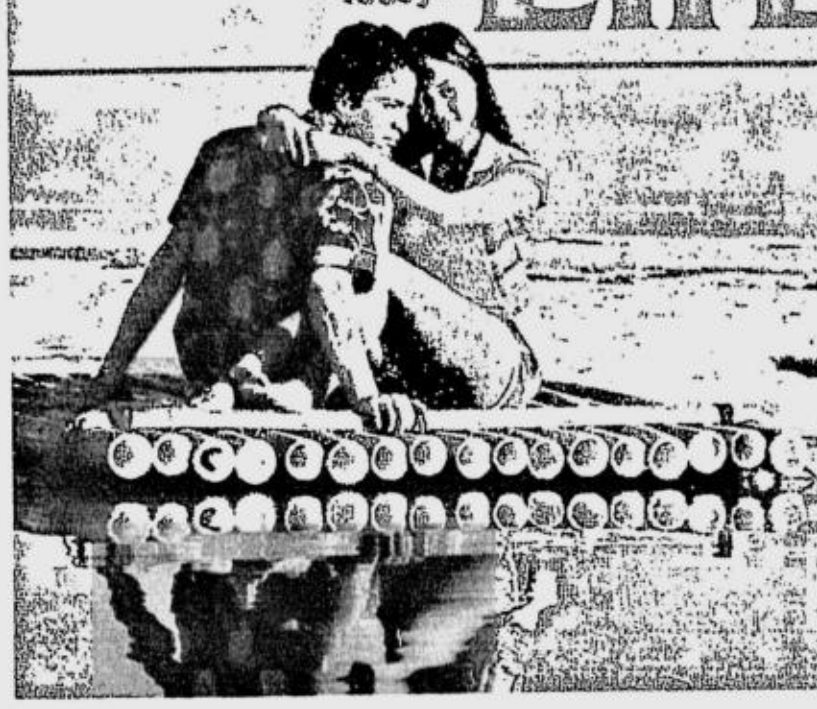

Summer chic and shine

The Fashion Freaks take over this week's 2bU!

WE bring you a behind-the-scenes look at the shoot of Pink and Blue Soda's summer campaign. We also have accessories that inspire creativity and add color to your heat-plagued world. But preparing your wardrobe isn't enough. Your skin needs to be ready for this season, too. So we bring you skin care tips and heavenly spa treatments to give away, thanks to our friends from Urban Spa.

ULTRA-THICK BANGLES.
P100 each,
from Geon Crafts

THE 2BU! FASHION FREAKS

Fun and flirty picks

Text and photos by Pam Pastor

Wearing these accessories is like time traveling to the 80s without the ugly capsule

WHO says one can only enjoy bazaar bounty during the holidays? Last week, thanks to a packed Internet café that booted us out, the Fashion Freaks ended up wandering to-

FUN/ C2

HEADBAND

SAHARIANE

One buff, fourteen accessories

How does one wear this hot fashion piece from 'Survivor'? Let us count the ways

WE'VE seen it on "Survivor." The buff wasn't just a tribe symbol, it was a fashion accessory.

It was interesting to see the contestants wear their buffs in different ways episode after episode after episode. On their heads, on their arms, even as tube tops.

It was an event almost as fascinating as the game itself. Almost, but not quite.

No wonder we were so giddy when we discovered that we didn't have to waste away for 39 days to get our hands on our own buffs.

Thanks to Brat Pack, the exclusive distributor of the Spain-based Buff products, we can just snap them up at the mall.

Shell out P790 for buffs from their original line and P850 for buffs from their National Geographic line.

We asked 15-year-old Pia Romero and 19-year-old Michael

ONE/ C3

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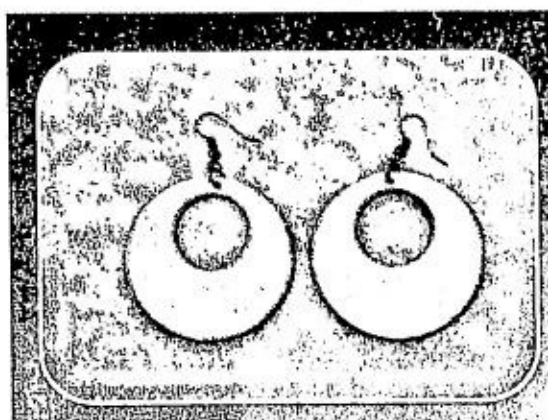
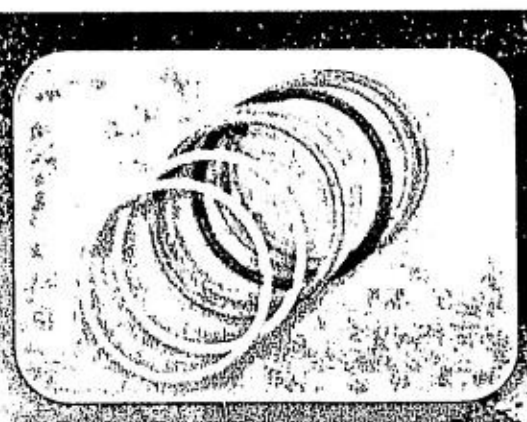
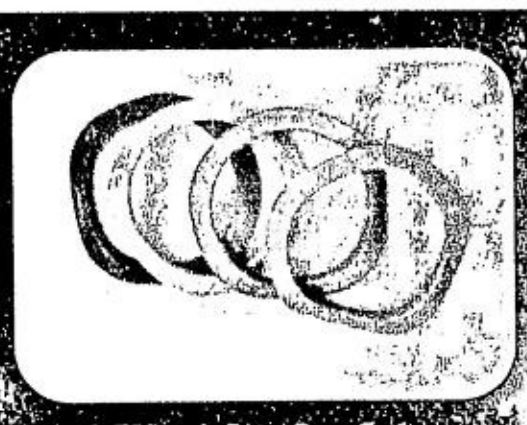


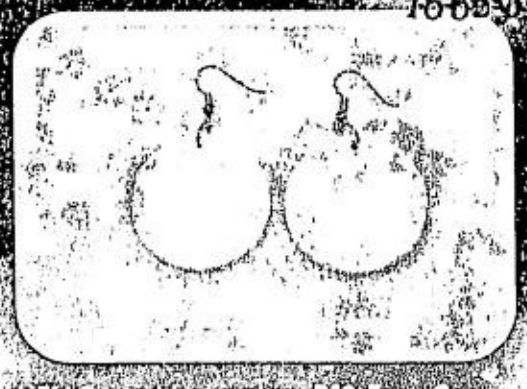
NEON EARRINGS, P50 per pair. From Geon Crafts



EYE CANDY bangles, P20 each. From Geon Crafts

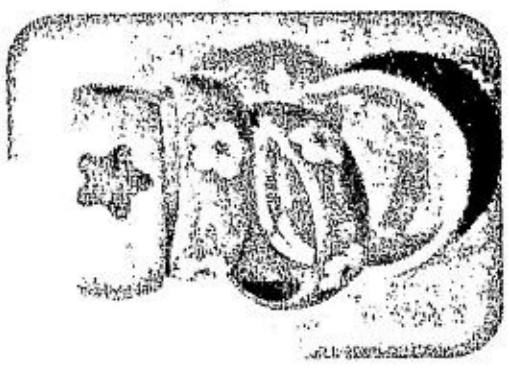


WAVES, P50 each. From Geon Crafts

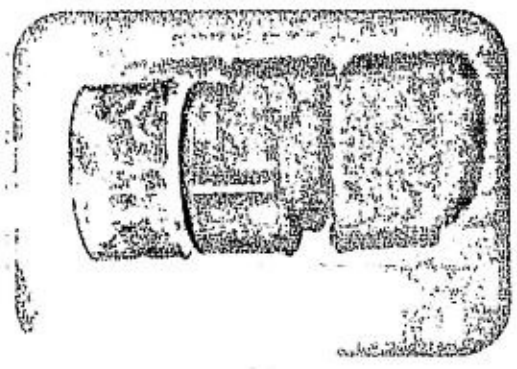


HELLO sunshine earrings, P50. From Geon Crafts

TWINKLE twinkle earr Crafts

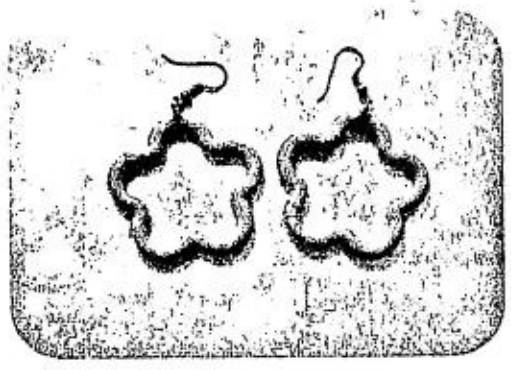


PATTERNS, P100 each



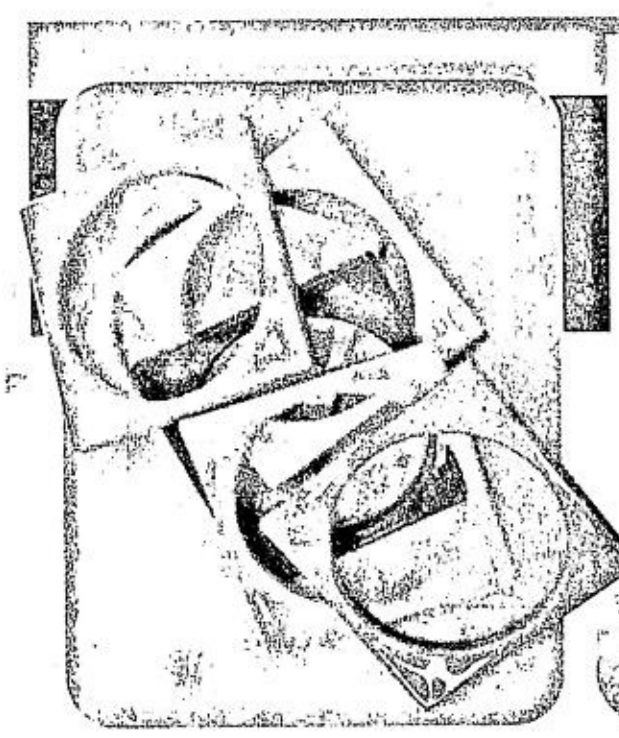
GLITTER girl cuffs, P100 each

DISC diva, P100 each

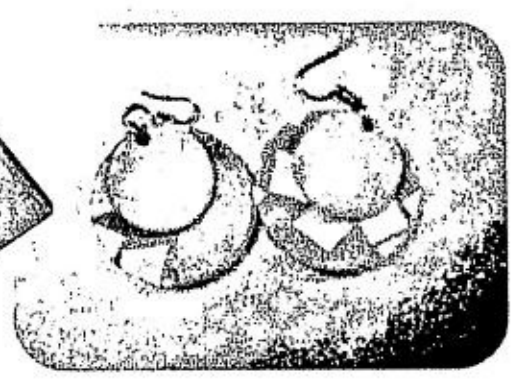


FLOWER power earrings, P50. From Geon Crafts

DAINTY decor earrings



HIP to be square, P50 each. From Geon Crafts



CUTE as a button earrings, P100

Fun and flirt

FROM THE FASHION FREAKS

From page C1

ward an accessories fair inside Greenbelt 1's Expo Exchange.

Seeing the chunky plastic bracelets, fab earrings and funky earrings from China, Korea, Hong Kong and Italy had us wild with excitement.

Forget the online addiction, we were in accessories heaven.

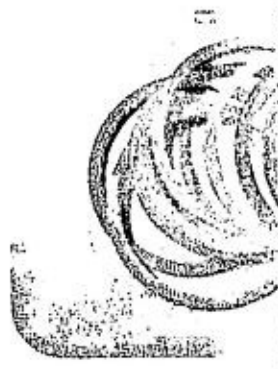
Correction, we were in '80s accessories heaven. It was like time traveling minus the ugly capsule.

Our finds are perfect for the summer. They're fun, colorful and flirty. They'd liven up your outfits and take your mind off the heat.

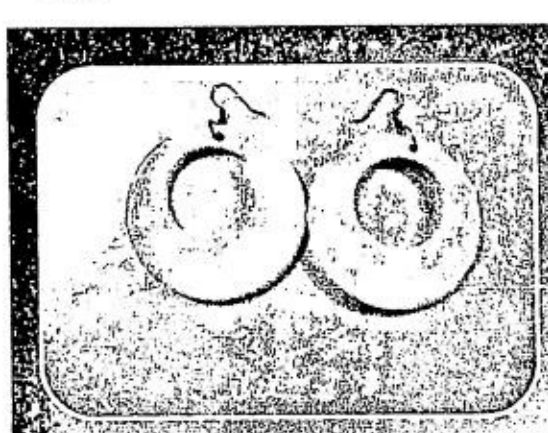
Just pray they don't melt.

Do you want the fashion freaks to visit your store or look at your wares? E-mail us at thefashionfreaks@yahoo.com

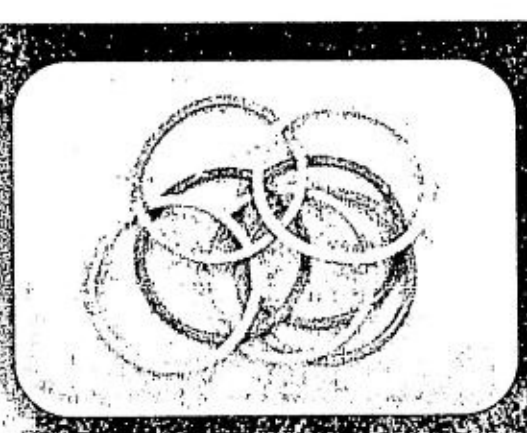
GEON CRAFTS' BOOTH CAN BE FOUND IN SM SOUTHMALL LAS PIÑAS UNTIL APRIL 16. CALL 0916-7883251. OTHER ACCESSORIES MAY BE FOUND IN BOOTHS AT AYALA CENTER MAKATI'S PARK SQUARE 1 UNTIL MAY. CALL 0927-3615808 OR 0921-2462808.



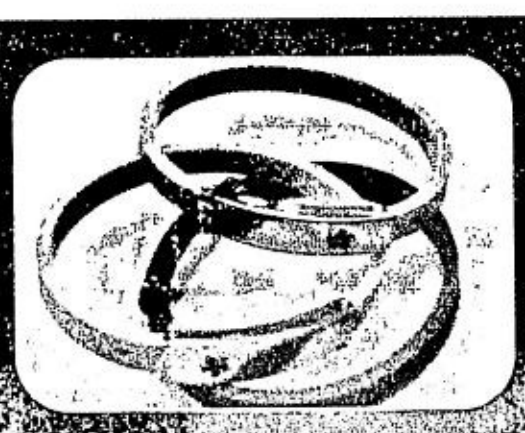
GIRLIE girl, P20 each. Fr



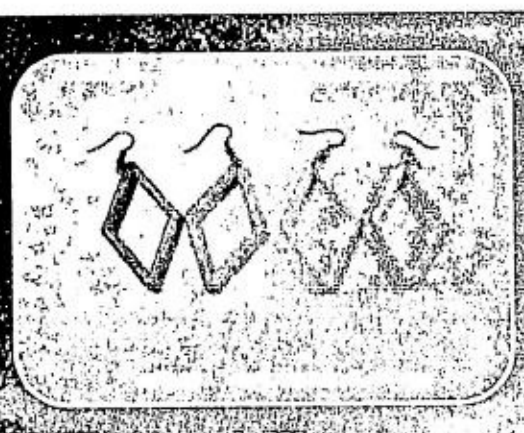
WHITE lady earrings, P80



RAINBOW for your arms, P20 each. From Geon Crafts

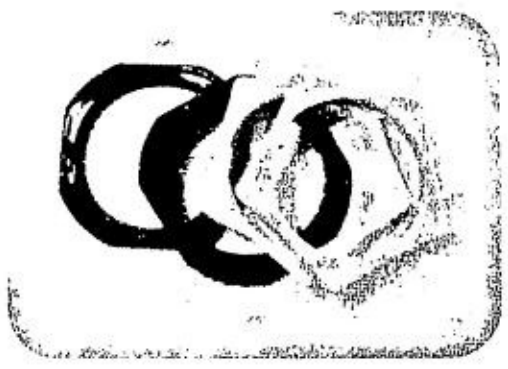


PASTEL princess, P50 each. These bracelets may be personalized. From Geon Crafts

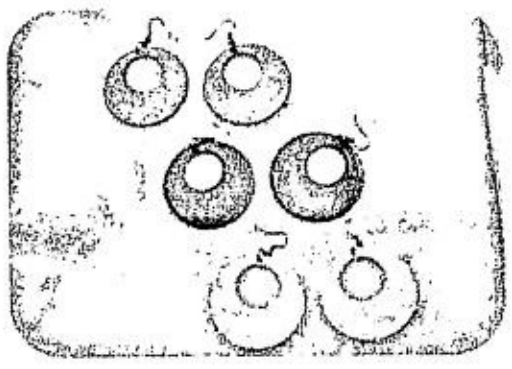


QUEEN of diamonds, P80 per pair

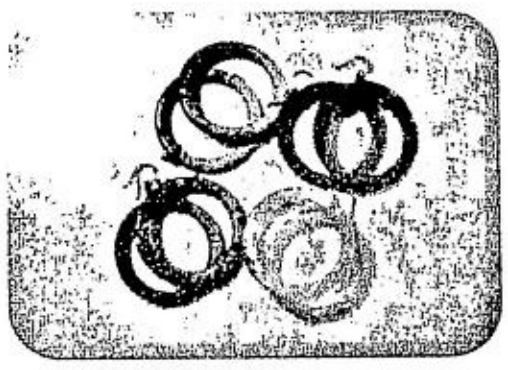
WEAR your heart on yo



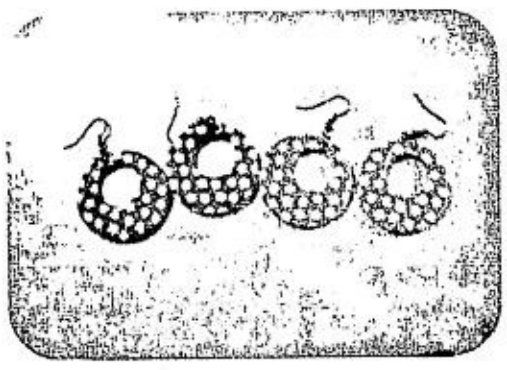
GEOM glam, P50 each



HOLE-IN-ONE, P50 per pair. From Geon Crafts



LIFESAVERS, P80 per pair



POLKA dots, P60 per pair

RETRO rock, P80 per pa

CAP

MASK

HAIRBAND

NECKERCHIEF

FOULARD

BLIND chicken

ALICE band/diadem

BALACLAVA

WRISTBAND

PIRATE

SCARF

THE MULTI-FUNCTION buff

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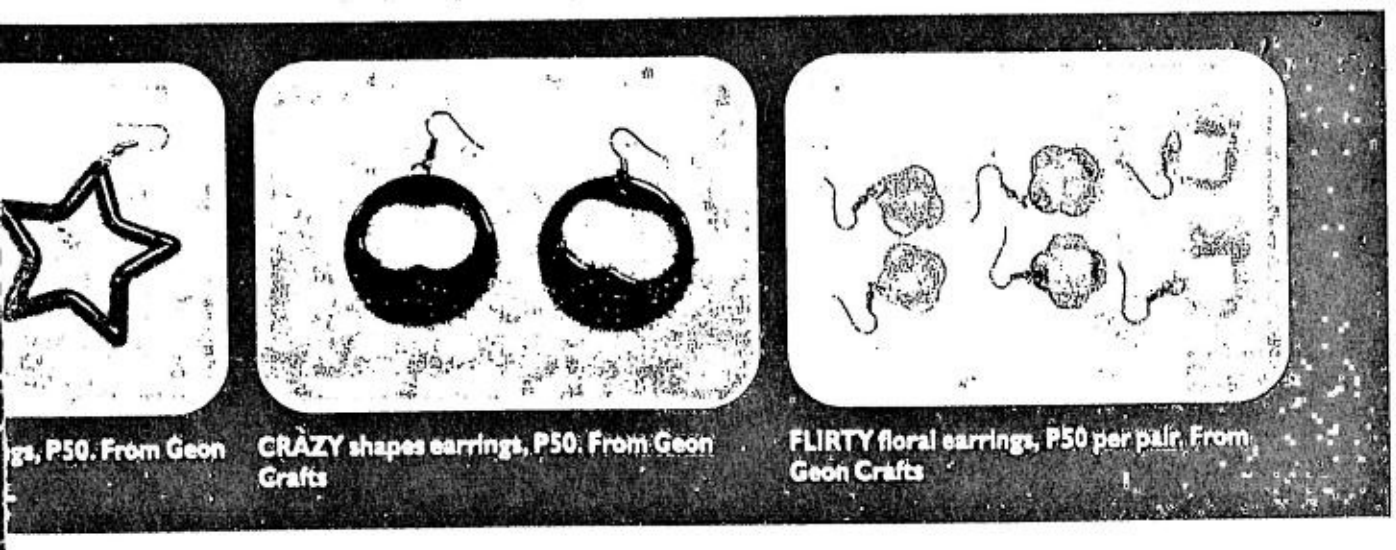
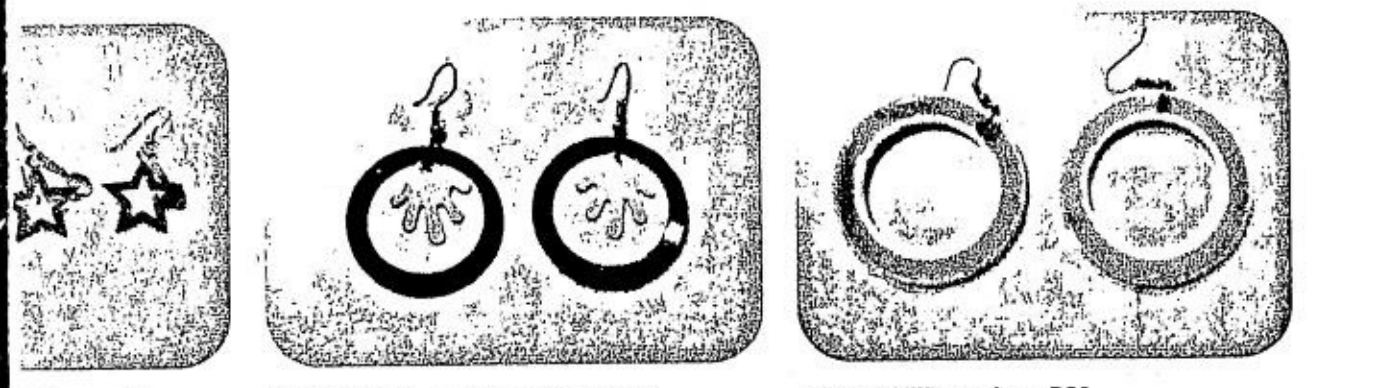


gs, P50. From Geon

CRAZY shapes earrings, P50. From Geon Crafts

FLIRTY floral earrings, P50 per pair. From Geon Crafts

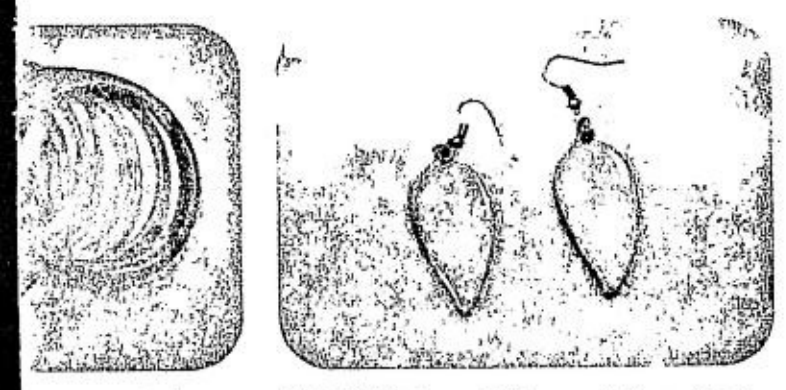


P60 per pair

HANDS-ON earrings, P80 per pair

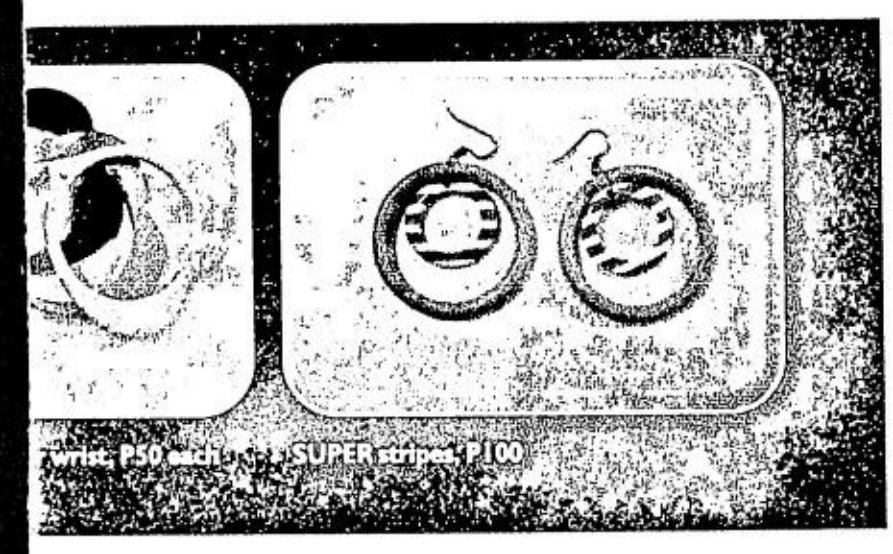
HOOPSTER earrings, P80

tVpicks



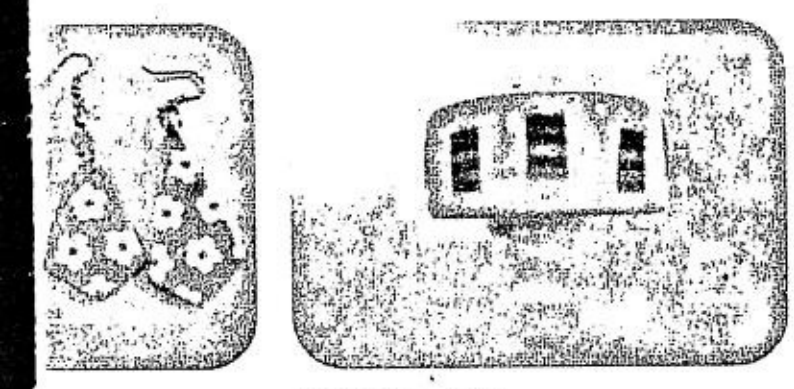
om Geon Crafts

DARLING drops, P50 per pair. From Geon Crafts



wrist, P50 each

SUPER stripes, P100



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GREEN fairy, P150

One buff, fourteen accessories

From page C1

Agassi (both from ABS-CBN's Talent Center) to demonstrate the many uses of this accessory.

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Pam Pastor

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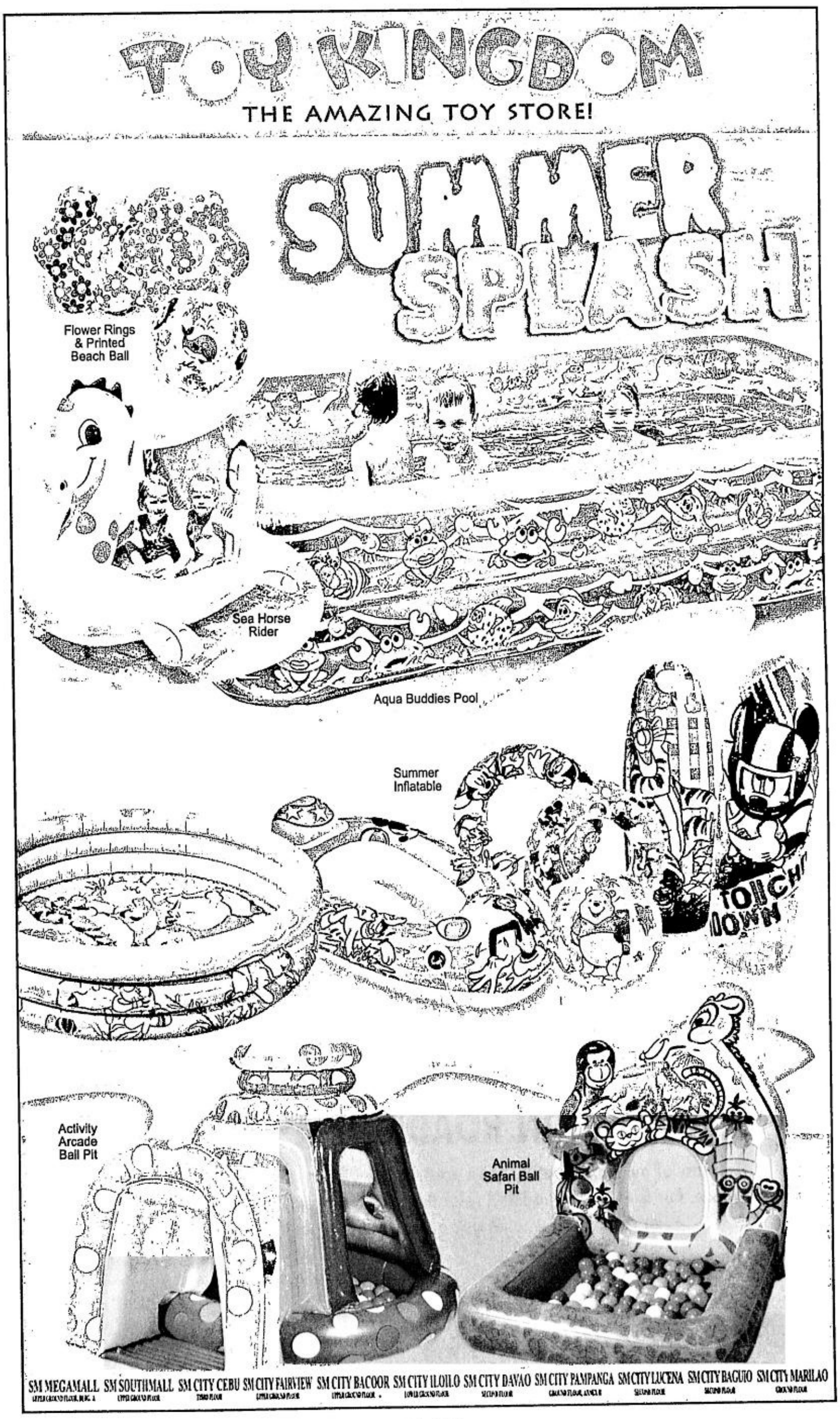

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She wants her ex back

DEAR Mark and Sep,

I am a fourth year college Psychology student. Though I am in that course, I find it hard to deal with this situation I am in now. I hope you can give me the best way to move on.

My boyfriend broke up with me three months ago because his parents discovered our relationship. It's simple; his parents threatened to put a stop to his education if he decides to have a relationship. He said he truly loves me but it's his studies that are hindering him from committing to a relationship.

After that heart-to-heart talk, I still showed him that I understand him, that I still love him and that I am willing to wait for him when he would be ready to commit to a relationship. I am his first love, as he said. He also expressed hope we would be together again in the future.

We are boardmates, and I have no plans to run away from him, but I am graduating this end of the school year. He is in third year, and so it means I am to leave him after graduation.

We're now friends, but our boardmates still consider us lovers.

But he's starting to treat me coldly. I feel neglected. I want him to be my husband. I want him back but he has changed. Am I just being overly sensitive and paranoid? He doesn't inform me about the places he goes to anymore. I try to ignore him but I get hurt.

PISCES GIRL

Your teachers should be fired for not equipping you with the necessary tools to deal with the situation you are in right now! Kidding.

Many thoughts flood my mind.

First, I think that if he really loved you, he would have lied to his parents about having a relationship so his studies wouldn't be put to a halt.

I also think that his parents were simply afraid their dear son would do badly in school once committed to someone, which led them to such an ultimatum. I guess your ex showed signs that he was neglecting his studies because of the relationship, which

Niño Mark Sablan & September Mabino

prompted his parents to do what they did.

I have this feeling, though, that he was just giving an alibi. It may be because he's afraid you'd "dump" him when you graduate and leave the place you're sharing, so he broke up with you first. And it may also be because he realized he missed his single life. All that freedom, all that time for school, no pesky partners to ask permission from, etc.—really very tempting.

Such a breakup makes one hope for reconciliation, but don't force it. Besides, the signs spell no together-again scenes any time soon.

Give him the time and space he wants while you go get a job. Don't step on the brakes and don't do nothing while waiting for him to take you back. Continue expressing your love for him, but continue living your life.

He will return if he finds a reason to do so. And if he doesn't, then you'd have a reason to pat your back for not having wasted your time while waiting for him.

MARK

The thing with love is that while it takes two people to make a relationship work out, it only takes one person to ruin it. My point? If your ex doesn't seem to have plans to reconcile with you, then you can't do anything about it.

We don't know if he meant what he said about his hopes of being with you again in the future. We don't know either if he told you the truth about why he decided to break off the relationship.

While it's fair to give your ex the benefit of the doubt regarding these things, we have to look at something more tangible to know what can be your next best step.

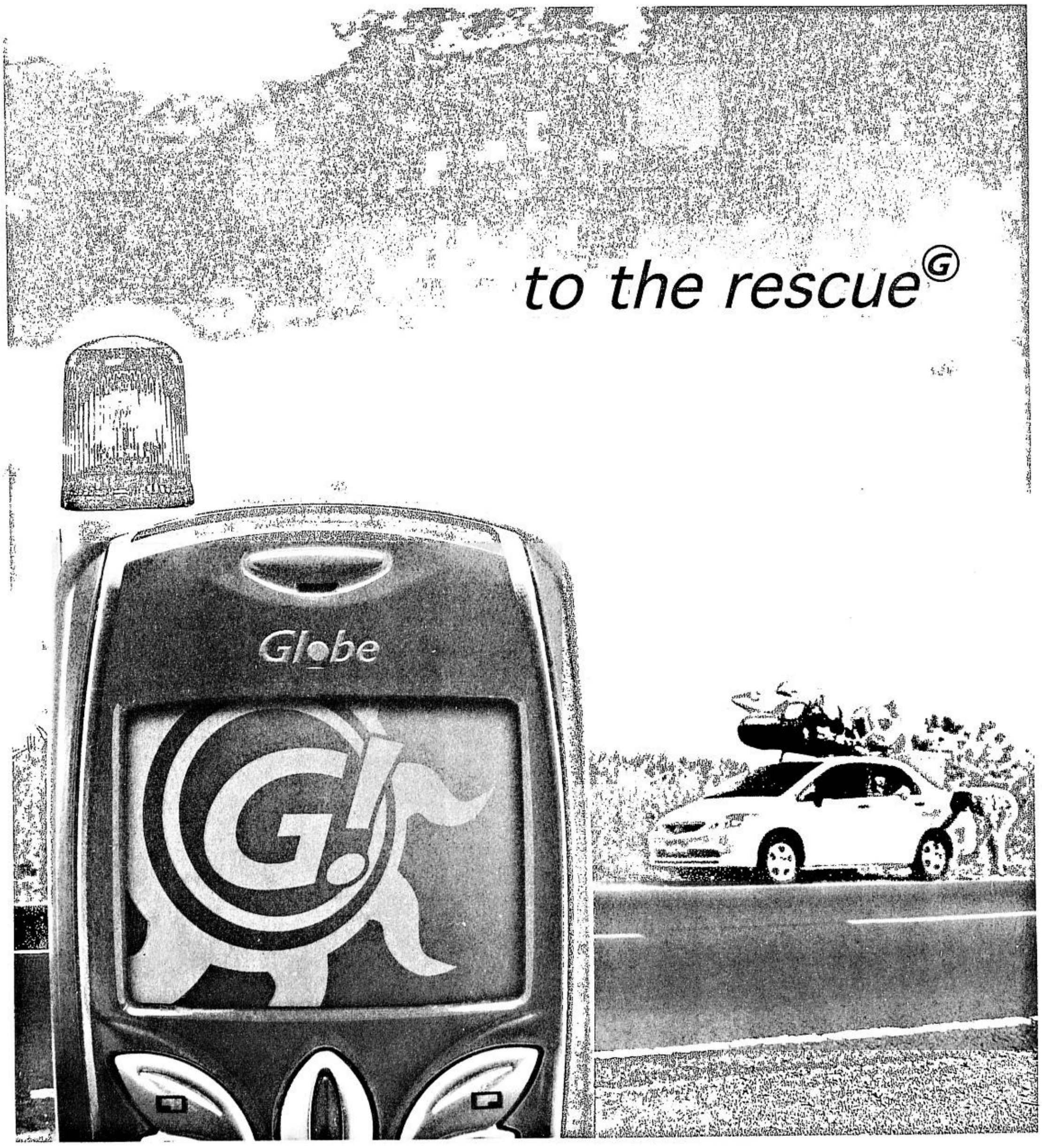
Given his cold behavior to you lately, I'd advise you not to put too much hope in what he has told you before. You can still dream a little about the love you've had and could still have with your ex, but don't put your life on hold just because of it.

In fact, ignore what I just said about dreaming. Hard as it may sound, you have to accept the worst-case scenario in your situation—that he wanted out and still wants out—and get over this chapter of your life.

Finish your studies, find a job, meet new people, continue the friendship with your ex if he still wants to. Whatever your plans may be, make sure you're emotionally moving on as well. I know it would hurt like hell, but at least it's better than being in the limbo you're in right now.

SEPTEMBER

E-mail the writers at markandsep@yahoo.com



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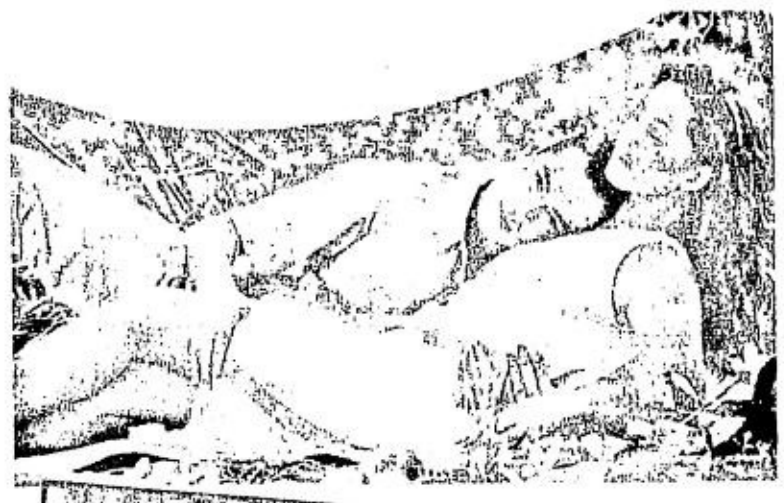
2bU! peeks at the Pink and Blue Soda summer shoot

Sun, sand and a couple of Sodas

By Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

LAST Feb. 11-13, I braved a bumpy and interminable van ride going to Pangasinan. The gig: Pink and Blue Soda's pictorial for their summer collection. The assignment: to have a blast mingling with the brands' image endorsers, enjoying the unparalleled scenery and stuffing myself silly.

Oh, and to make sure I write about the whole experience too. So here it is.



SERENITY in the pocket paradise that is Puerto del Sol, Bolinao, Pangasinan

The staff

The very famous Jun de Leon once again rendered his unmatched services for the brand. Looking like the debonair guy that he is, the lensman gave off directions and clicked crazily.

Publicist Jet Valle tagged along to look after the talents, ending up as foster mother to everyone. Designers Jun Trinidad and Jonathan Allegre made sure the models' clothes were properly donned. Makeup artist Toto whipped out his brush and made the models even more gorgeous.

There have been a lot of celebrities who once in their careers put on a Pink Soda or Blue Soda shirt or blouse. The long list includes Angelika dela Cruz, Aiko Melendez, Jennifer Sevilla, Eric Quizon and Gio Alvarez.

The current crop is composed of the wacky Rafael Rosell, the serious John Lloyd Cruz and the perky Kaye Abad. The newbie on the block (although she's not entirely a neophyte when it comes to posing for the lens) is the outspoken Bianca Gonzales.

The owners

Pink and Blue Soda owners Mr. and Mrs. Bona were also part of the trip to Bolinao, Pangasinan. Just like any pair of proud and responsible parents, they made sure everyone was safe and having a great time.

The venue

Pangasinan's Puerto del Sol beach resort-hotel played host and home to everyone. A property of the Bonas, it's heaven on earth with cozy and well-designed accommodations that made us want to live there forever.

The concept, the clothes and the shoot

Eight layouts were needed for the clothing brands' print ads and billboards. With summer around, the seashore proved to be the best spot for a

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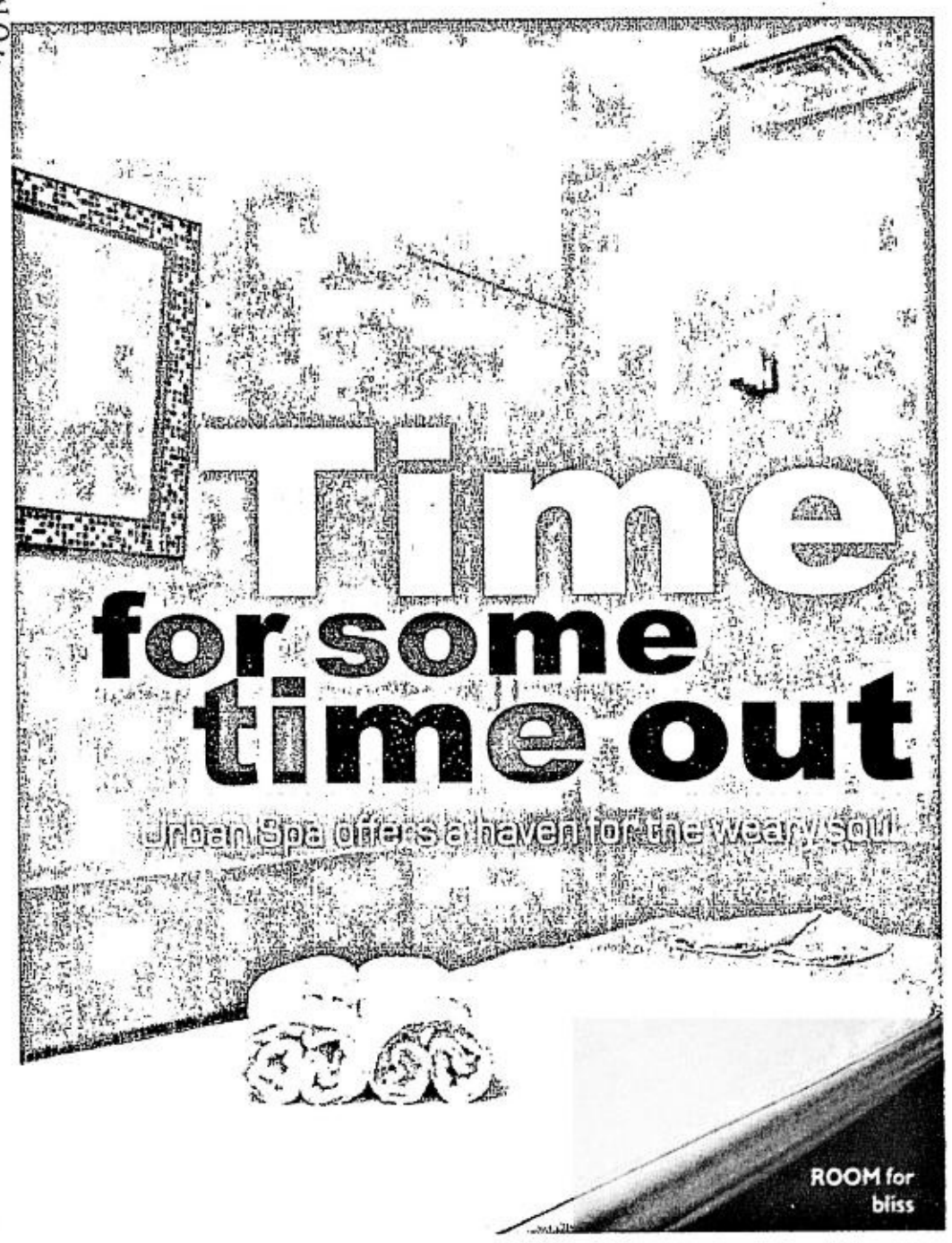
time for some time out

Urban Spa offers a haven for the weary soul



ROOM for bliss

URBAN Spa's cozy interiors

By Pam Pastor

TO SAY it was hell week would not suffice. I was swamped with deadlines, meetings, pictorials and other appointments. On top of that, the car overheated. My stress levels shot up even higher.

It was the perfect time for a spa treatment. A Luxury Polish, to be exact.

Urban Spa's doors welcomed me. As I was led into the women's lounge, a sense of calm descended upon me. The place was quiet, the darkness kissed by candles, and soft music was playing. It was easy to forget that I was actually inside a mall. I felt like tiptoeing.

Erna led me to my room (no communal massage rooms in this spa, thank God)—a dimly lit beauty with just enough space for a massage bed and a bathtub.

It looked like heaven to me.

Erna handed me the slip, disposable underwear and slippers that I was to use. Then she gave me a few minutes alone so I could disrobe.

Exfoliation

When she returned, she asked me to lie face down on the massage table. It was time for stage one. Exfoliation.

At first, my brain refused to stop functioning. I kept running through a very loaded mental checklist of the things I had to do. Pushing away my thoughts was a struggle. But soon, I felt myself relaxing.

With her powerful hands, Erna kneaded my whole body with Dead Sea salt. The roughness of the salt felt good against my tired skin. Erna was very thorough—massaging even between my fingers and toes. I silently said goodbye to my dead cells.

"We use a circular motion so the skin won't experience trauma," Erna said. Trauma was very far from my mind.

I was asked to roll over so Erna could scrub the rest of my body. I was enjoying the treatment so much I didn't even care that I was naked save for the disposable undies.

When Erna was done scrubbing, she left to prepare the shower room. (There are rooms with their own shower stalls, but they were all occupied at that time.)

She was back seconds later to hand me a towel and direct me to the other room. "Please use the bath gel," she said, motioning towards the dispenser.

I did. The warm water washed away the salt, leaving traces of lavender oil on my skin.

Moisturization

I returned to the treatment room and Erna motioned for me to lie face down on the bed again.

Stage two was about to begin. Moisturization.

And at this spa, moisturization is done the natural way.

Erna was about to massage my body with honey. "We use pure honey. We dilute it with little water so it wouldn't be too sticky," she said.

After the lovely salt scrub and my hot shower, I was ready for anything. Erna could have said she was about to stick pins and needles into me and I probably wouldn't have protested.

She slathered honey onto my legs and started massaging. She worked on my feet, my legs, my thighs, my back, my neck, my arms. Then I rolled over again so she could massage the rest of me. During those moments, Erna became my favorite person in the world.

She had magic hands. Several times, I had to check if she was using a roller or a brush. The pressure was perfect, as were the strokes and techniques she used.

Yes, the honey was sticky but it felt really good. At that point, my mind had completely blanked. The pampering left me in a state of bliss.

When I was covered in honey, Erna stretched my body, pulling both feet and then both hands.

Then she led me to the shower again.

"Just water this time. No bath gel," she said as I stepped into the stall.

I rinsed off the honey, marveling at the fresh feeling of my skin. And it wasn't just my skin. I felt calm and serene.

Other treats

As I was changing back into my clothes, I was already planning my next visit. And why not? Urban Spa still has countless treats I can try in the future.

The Luxury Polish (P1,400) that I enjoyed may also be paired with a Milk Bath (P500) and a Hair Spa Treatment (P660 for short, P1,050 for long) for a heightened experience.

Urban Spa also offers different kinds of aromatherapy massage. They recommend the Le Urban Spa Signature (P1,100)—a combination of Swedish, Shiatsu and Thai Stretching. There's also a 30-minute Foot Massage (P550). Treatments using Ingrid Millet's Skin Care line include Perle de Caviar (collagen eyes—P1,300, anti-wrinkle—P2,200, energetic collagen—P2,500), White Control (lightening—P1,800, anti-pigmentation—P2,100), Source Pure (a treatment that promises to reveal the skin's freshness. Treatments cost between P1,300 to P1,600, depending on skin type) and Marinea (thallasotherapy—P1,100, balancing-detoxifying—P1,200).

Packages include Executive Bliss (A taste of different treatments—body scrub, Swedish massage and mini facial that lasts for an hour and a half, P2,130), As In Heaven (A head-to-toe pampering treat that lasts for half a day, P4,720) and I Love Weddings (A beauty programme that prepares a bride—or even her groom and entourage if she wishes—for her special day).

There's also a consumable P15,000 package that's valid for a year and entitles clients to 20-percent discount on treatments.

The spa's double doors opened again to release me back into my world of chaos, but there was an extra bounce in
felt extra smooth and for th
people kept telling me I sm
can you not appreciate that?

Erna says that ideally, a
for a body scrub once a we
too busy, once a month is ok

I'll be back—maybe not a
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"PEARLY shells, from the ocean... ," techno version

Holding back is hard to do

Tim Yap

SAD TO say, it is a Pinoy trait. Instead of just letting go and fully expressing ourselves, we would rather suppress our urge, make the sign of the cross and make sure no one notices. Who cares if we choke to death?

Don't get me wrong. I am not trying to push teenage pregnancy or radical politics. Since this is a social column, I would rather discuss patterns I observe while I'm on the night prowl.

For one, this past weekend has been an eye-opener in terms of the sheer number of excited punters all ready to party for their summer break. There seems a sign on everyone's foreheads: "Bora, here we come!" I have a dear friend who has packed her luggage of light clothes for the beach one month early—talk about fasting.

Seeing everyone in full party mode (even if it is Holy Week—and just right after watching "The Passion of the Christ"—okay, I am not giving anyone a guilt trip) makes me wonder why a whole slew of bars and clubs all closed down. The entire week, the night spots were not enough to accommodate everyone that wanted to indulge before heading to their summer destination.

Gritty grinding

The Saturday seduction belonged to MTV's Summer Grind party at the NBC Tent. Hordes of youngsters trooped to the party venue to shake their booties to **Steve Mills**' brand of R&B. "I spotted a 16-year-old who was about to bare her top!" one of the organizers told me in a surprised tone. Parents, beware.

By midnight, the "grinding" began. I was one of the judges tasked to handpick the best "grind." "What is a grind?" The two female judges—boobylicious babes **Patricia Javier** and Dr. **Vicki Belo** asked me. "Is it like this?" And they proceeded to do some hot lesbo action gestures not fit to see its light of day in print, since this is a wholesome youth section. Oh, the event was sponsored by Smart Addict, TechnoMarine watches and Frenzy, with its catchy slogan—the "party condoms." (Hmmm, I wonder if it's multi-colored or something?)

Later on, we observed the dancing dudes and dudettes onstage and though they seemed really game, a lot were obviously holding back. I don't know if it was stage fright, shyness or what—but hey, if you registered for a contest, then might as well give it your all! Hog the spotlight, let the judges and the audience notice you! A false sense of modesty is definitely not needed in situations like these.

But there was a couple who gave it their all, and more! If this was "American Idol," and I was, say, **Simon Cowell**, I'd tell them, "We said we wanted sexy, not sex." But I still gave them an A (for **Abdul, Paula**?) for effort.

When the passive ones were weeded out of the competition, it was time for a surefire dance showdown. One by one, they gyrated their way to their partner's hips and jiggy-ed up and down, up and down—till the winners came (meaning, chosen—you dirty-minded scoundrel!).

DJ **Leroy** (formerly of Prodigy) followed suit with his break beat set—a sound trip so refreshing and invigorating. The punters and the partyphiles continued to groove and grind till I don't know what time. Perhaps as a prequel to their non-stop partying in Boracay?

Temple, temple!

Midweek's tantalizing treat was the Temple's first-year anniversary, with what else—beach!—as its "tan-tric" theme.

So *sando*- and sarong-clad partyphiles filled the Greenbelt strip, proof of Temple's loyal patronage.

It was an interesting mix of uptown and downtown hip—scenesters meet dance meisters meet low-pro types meet summer-break kids. I have a feeling a new breed of clubbers will emerge from this scene—really exciting to watch out for!

Another example of how Manila is looking forward to its beach vacation is the fact that even the giant golden Buddha inside Temple (yup, the one constant witness to a lot of dancefloor trysts) was wearing a full summer luau gear of shades, flowers and grass skirt! Beat that.

Kudos goes to nightlife prince **Erik Cua** who, at 23, is slowly but surely building his empire this side of town. The other feathers in his nocturnal cap include Jack's Loft and Basement in Libis. He's a guy whose success is not likely to be held back. Attaboy!

Holy week haunts

Same time last year, that hip, young service called Addict Mobile was launched in a big, big way in the shores of Boracay. This year, these Addicts are at it again, with Big Fish's Easter Weekender at Hey Jude!

It starts tomorrow, Thursday, 10 p.m. till late with the Vibe at Island Grooves with DJ Steve Mills, **Aryan** and **Ace**.

On Saturday, a bigger and better Slinky—now on its third year, featuring **Ken Ishii** and **Lenny Ibizarre** and **TC**. There are also sunset sessions at Waling Waling from 4-7 p.m. Thursday, it's with **Phil Mison**, Friday with Lenny Ibizarre, and t
back to back on Saturday!

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Your skincare battle plan for the summer

SUNBURN, prickly heat, insect bites, breakouts—these are just some of the common skin problems that might stop you from enjoying your vacation.

Dr. Claire Palabyab, resident dermatologist of Urban Spa, shares practical skincare tips to keep you and your skin happy this summer.

• Sunblock is very important, and not only when you're going to the beach. Use a lower SPF for normal activities like driving. If you're going to the beach, use something much stronger.

• The SPF number isn't the only thing that matters. It's important, too, to make sure your sunblock stays on your body. Put on the sunblock half an hour before your skin is exposed to the sun for better absorption. If you're going to be in the water, reapply sunblock approximately every half hour. A sunblock of SPF 30 and up are okay. SPF 15 is okay for city living.

• Sunblock that comes in stick form is more advisable than the liquid kind. First, it doesn't wash off easily. Even if you perspire and wipe your face, it doesn't get erased easily. And when you go in the water, the danger of getting sunblock into your eyes is diminished.

• If you have plans of exposing your skin to the sun, check with your doctor and dermatologist first. Some creams and medications make you more sensitive to the sun. Some antibiotics may cause your skin to discolor. You may have to stop these treatments before hitting the beach.

• Use lip balm with SPF to protect your lips. Avoid scented and flavored ones because these are sensitizers.

• Wear a hat to protect your scalp. This is especially important for people with thinning hair.

• If you can, avoid going out in the sun

Sunblock is very important, and not only when you're going to the beach

between the hours of 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

• People who go to the beach should bring enough protection from sand fleas. These bites can be very itchy and can last for a long time. Avoid insect bites by using an insect repellent.

• Don't scratch insect bites. If you scratch them too much, they might become nodular—elevated, dark and discolored. Definitely not pretty.

• If you know you're extra-sensitive to insect bites, visit your dermatologist so he or she might be able to prescribe an emergency cream that contains cortisone, in case you get allergies.

• Don't self-medicate.

• Jellyfish sting is painful, itchy and leaves marks. In the unfortunate event that you experience the wrath of this ocean creature, put something acidic on the area right away, like vinegar. It will help a lot.

• If you have *an-an* (fungal infection), you might want to stay away from the sun. Tanning your skin will make these white spots more obvious.

• Acne commonly flares up in the warmer months. Sleeping late also aggravates pimples, so get enough sleep. If your skin is oily, wash your face often to avoid buildup. *PP*

Dr. Claire Palabyab has clinics at the 4th floor of Medico Building (Medical City) and Unit M27, San Antonio Arcade, Forbes Park, Makati, with tels. 6336737/ 8154838. She is also available for consultation at Urban Spa.

Y LUAU. DJ
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Watch this Lenten Season the most affecting film of the Year!

5 WINNER! EMMY AWARDS
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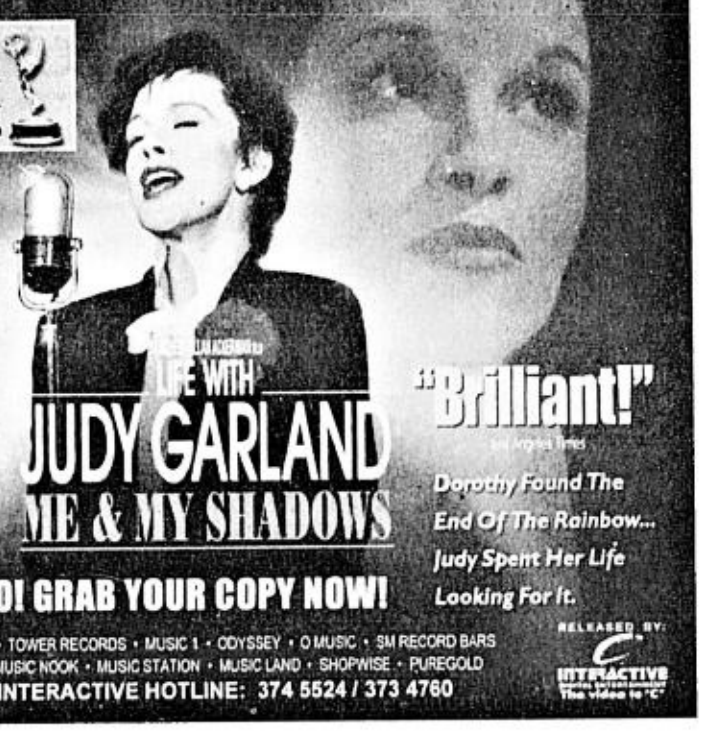
BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS TAMMY BLANCHARD

The remarkable story of Hollywood legend Judy Garland is vividly told in this widely acclaimed film, which features amazing Emmy Award-winning portrayals by Judy Davis (Best Actress) and Tammy Blanchard (Best Supporting Actress). Loved by millions the world over, Judy was the brightest star in Hollywood's Golden Era. Away from the bright lights and brilliant performances however, her devotion was to her family. But while she loved her children unconditionally, they could only desperately try and hang on to their mother as a powerful dependence on alcohol and prescription drugs began to consume her life. Based on the book by Garland's daughter, Lorna Luft, and honored recipient of 5 Emmy Awards, Life With Judy Garland: Me And My Shadows is a deeply moving testament to the healing powers of embracing one's past, facing one's demons and charting a course of self-discovery!



"Brilliant!"
Los Angeles Times

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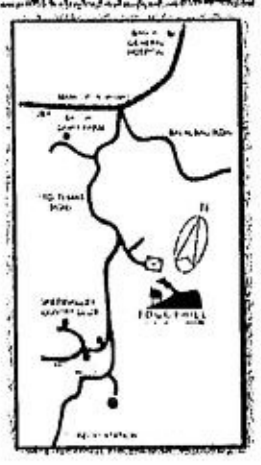

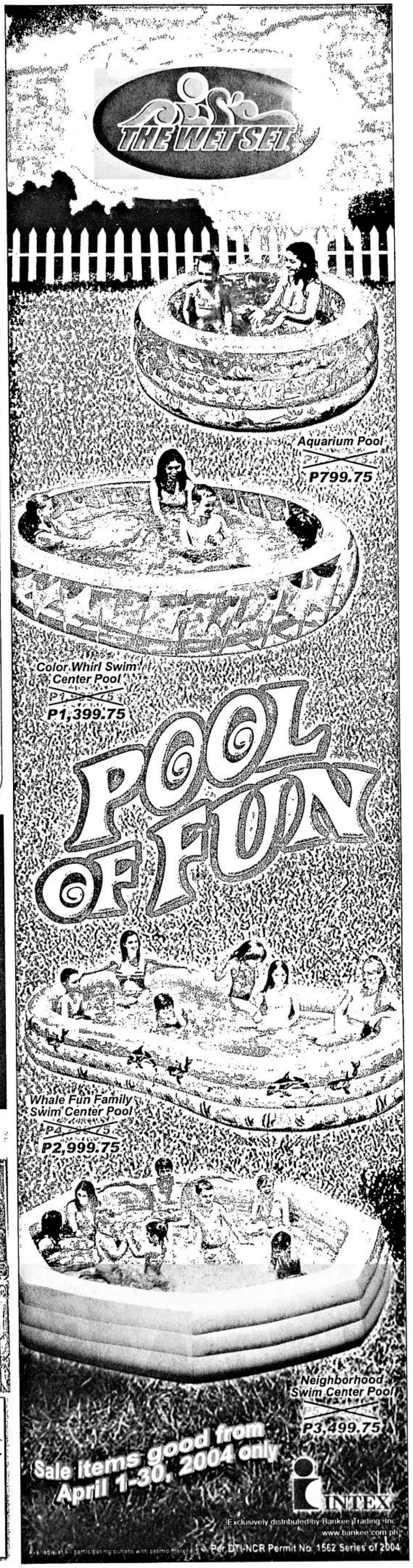

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THE BUSY crew

Sun, sand and a couple of Sodas

From page D1

pictorial for the brands' summer fashion shoot.

The wardrobe, which had an '80s touch, according to Jun Trinidad, consisted of tees and cut-off pants for the guys and dresses, blouses and hot shorts for the girls. In shades of hot pink, lime green and various shades of orange, the clothes were definitely brighter than the brands' holiday collection.

"It's how you should be, how you should celebrate summer," says Trinidad, on what the collection is all about.

The result

Of course, the results were fabulous. But don't take my word for it. Very soon, you'll be seeing for yourselves the ads splashed on the pages of various publications and on billboards along the highways.

In the meantime, you'd have to content yourselves with 2bU!'s behind-the-scenes snapshots of Pink and Blue Soda's 2004 summer fashion shoot.

CELEBRATING summer the Pink and Blue Soda way

St. Petersburg
Mt. Sto. Tomas, Baguio City

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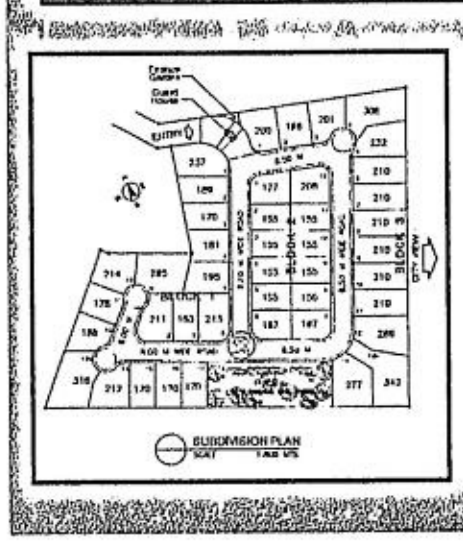
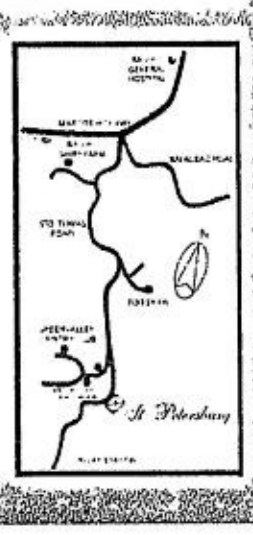




OWNER / DEVELOPER

Bubble boys and girls

Text and photos by Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

TWO guys, two girls, two brands. Different personalities, various fashion styles and beliefs. Meet the hip brands' bubbly endorsers and take a dose of their infectious freshness.

Kaye Abad

Kaye is a simple girl with a simple fashion style. For someone who belongs to the glitzy world of show business, this 21-year-old is a great fan of the shirt-and-jeans ensemble. Needless to say, Kaye is very grateful for the clothes she gets from Pink Soda, of which she has been an image model for two years now.

OH KAYE. Kaye thinks simplicity is a-okay.

Not only do the clothes fit her character in the soap "Sana'y Wala Nang Wakas," they are also cool and comfy enough for malling and gimmicks.

While Kaye has a growing number of fans, she herself is a fan of Pink Soda's apparel, singling out the comfy underwear as one of the brand's best offerings.

But before pubescent boys start anticipating billboards of Kaye in her undies, she hastens to add that she's not really comfy even in hanging blouses and tube tops, and she definitely hates strapless bras.

Looking up to the simple yet elegant Julia Roberts as her fashion icon, Kaye advises teeners to be themselves. "Check if the style fits you and your personality," she says.

Definitely, Kaye did her assignment, because her simple fashion style fits her like a glove and brings out the best in her.

John Lloyd Cruz

For someone who doesn't consider himself fashionable, 20-year-old John Lloyd sure looks fabulous on our TV screens, on those traffic and stiff neck-inducing billboards and, most especially, in the flesh.

Blame it on the Blue Soda apparel he's usually garbed in. Blame it on the brand and its wide variety of hip, casual clothes that John Lloyd particularly likes because of their simplicity.

LLOYD OF THE SOAPS. This drama prince reveals that he doesn't consider himself fashionable.

He passionately declares his loathing for loud colors and clothes that scream their logos. He also shares how he's not really liberated, expressive and aggressive when it comes to fashion.

Our dear Yuri is a jeans-and-shirt type of guy who is partial to white, black and other neutral colors. "My fashion is dark and boring," he says.

He prefers tees over polos and is very grateful for the free clothes he gets as an official endorser. Aside from wearing them in his soap "It Might Be You," he is also spotted clad in Blue Soda during gimmicks and trips to the mall.

After revealing that he doesn't have any fashion icon and that he considers fellow model Rafael Rosell as Blue Soda personified, John Lloyd says comfort should come before any fashion trend.

Well, he must be doing the right thing, given how he's making all the girls swoon. Then again, it just might be the clothes.

Rafael Rosell

Rafael goes for the relaxed and laidback look when it comes to clothes, which is a great contrast to his bubbly, hyper and crazy personality. Despite this, one look at Raffy in his Blue Soda apparel and you can see a great combination.

RAFF RAFF! Hyper and wacky Rafael is Blue Soda personified, according to fellow image model John Lloyd

In between flashes of his Close Up smile, Raffy explains why Blue Soda's stuff are the best. Not only are they cool, casual and comfy, they also exude simplicity, he says. Blue Soda's items are subtle yet still very stylish.

Raffy picks Colin Farrell as his personal style icon, noting how the Hollywood star went to some high-class gig clad only in a shirt and pair of jeans. Raffy also adores Jennifer Lopez for knowing how to dress up her curves, and loves Jolina Magdangal for her own style and not giving a damn about what others say.

The experimental and adventurous side of Rafael Rosell surfaced when he showed me his once-pierced tongue and demonstrated how he used to sport an almost-mohawk hairstyle. He's also contemplating shaving the whole of his head, and getting a scorpion tattoo somewhere, uhm, really hidden.

Whatever fashion dares and trends Raffy intends to pursue, one thing is certain: Blue Soda will always be there to complement his style.

Bianca Gonzales

With large sparkling eyes and the widest grin I've ever seen, this 20-year-old Atenista is physically captivating and intellectually stimulating, making her a perfect Pink Soda image model.

SHE IS ONE OF THEM NOW. Bianca Gonzales is the latest Pink Soda image model.

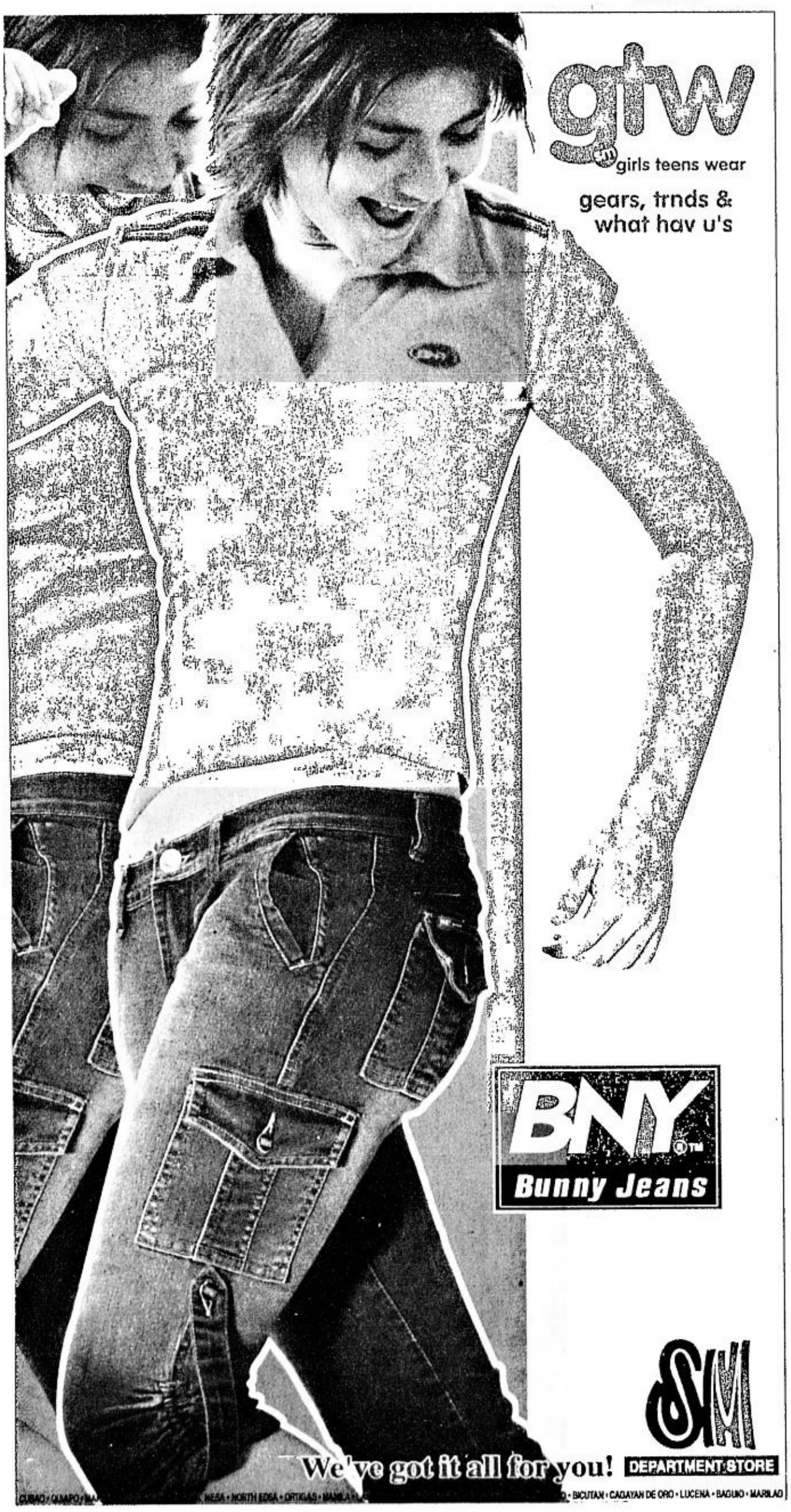
As the newest endorser of the hip line of apparel, Bianca was introduced to the label by batchmate Audrey Tan, herself a recent endorser, but who is now off to the States.

This print ad and commercial model, who's best remembered for her literally sparkling eyes in the Gentxt ad for Globe, doesn't love anything in particular from the Pink Soda shops. That's because she loves everything that the store has. She isn't tied down to a single style as well, so you can spot her in different get-ups, depending on her mood.

Good thing Pink Soda has a wide variety of clothes any adventurous girl can choose from. One thing Bianca likes about the brand is their stuff that are simple and plain, but always with a twist. She also can't stop raving about Pink Soda's pair of ultra-comfy cloth pants that fit her so perfectly.

Most Pinays end up folding their pants or having them altered, she says, but her Pink Soda pants are perfect in length for her.

Known to wear various flip flops and Chuck Taylors, this Angel Jacob fanatic has this piece of advice for young fashionistas: "You shouldn't be dictated by trends. Don't be a slave. Develop your own sense of style."

Yes, Bianca has successfully developed her own sense of style and is flaunting it to many, thanks to Pink Soda.

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